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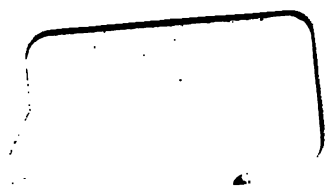
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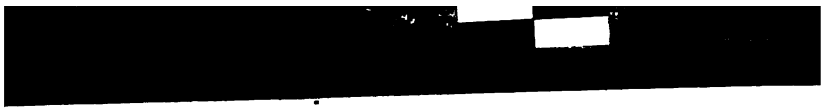
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1. Fiction, American.







THE TASTE OF APPLES



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**THE
TASTE OF APPLES**

BY
JENNETTE LEE
*Author of "Uncle William," "Happy Island,"
"Mr. Achilles," etc.*

**ILLUSTRATIONS BY
F. WALTER TAYLOR**



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TO
GERALD STANLEY LEE

WAP 100



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She went on stitching and turning, her face absorbed
in its work (Page 81) *Frontispiece*

Suddenly he stopped and looked down—it was quite a
different pair ^{FACING}_{PAGE} 110

Mother, from her model-stand, looked down on them . 230

“It means you’ll have a new daughter, Mother” . . . 320





THE TASTE OF APPLES





I

THE SHOP WHERE NOTHING COULD HAPPEN

THE light in the little shop was dim. The shoemaker's fat assistant scowled at it, and got up and hunted for a match and lighted the gas-jet on the wall. The light sprang suddenly out on the littered room, and the three men across the room, bending close over a checker-board, looked up and blinked as it flickered down. One of them put out his hand to the board, and held it a minute, and drew it back and stroked a little grey fringe of beard that depended from his chin. The other two men laughed a little, sitting shrewdly back; then they bent again to the board. The fat assistant stitched glumly on.

The room was full of dancing shadows now. They fell on the scraps of leather on the floor and on dusty corners and windows and cobwebs, and they danced a little on the shoemaker's

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empty bench, worn black and shiny with the polish of years, and ran along his hat and coat, hanging on the peg by the door. The shoemaker had left his bench almost guiltily, two hours ago, and had stolen over to the checkerboard. He had not stirred since, except to reach out a thin hand to dispose of a doomed man or to checkmate the little grey beard that wagged opposite him. The third man, a hand on either knee, looked down, as Jove may have looked upon the Trojans and their enemies, and gave a mighty nod as the battle went either way.

The fat assistant took up his awl and scowled at it and stabbed it once or twice in the leather, and stuck it upright in the bench beside him, and drew another waxed needful through the holes, his mouth growing more and more puckered and screwed-up, with each heavy pull of the waxed thread through the holes. He glanced across at the bent heads and got up, fumbling a little at the strings of his big apron, and cast it from him, and took down his hat and

NOTHING COULD HAPPEN 3

went darkly out. The three men looked up blankly as the little whiff of air slammed past them. Then they returned to the board, and quiet settled on the room.

The grey beard wagged twice, once in protest and once in resignation; he drew a heavy sigh. Then he bent to the board, fingering the pieces a little and shoving them about. "If I'd 'a' moved here, you wouldn't 'a' done it!" he said triumphantly.

"Huh!" said the large man—partly in astonishment, partly incredulous; he bent ponderously down to look.

The shoemaker nodded slowly toward the grey beard that perked out across the board at him. "I see it, Simon, after I'd moved—I see it; yes, you could 'a' took me if you'd moved that way." The shoemaker's thin fingers hovered over the pieces, setting the men back in their rows. "We might try again, Simon——"

Then he looked up. The door had opened almost timidly. The shoemaker got up and went forward. The young girl handed him a

snoes lay in his hand. He turned them over on the palm of his hand and looked at the girl.

"Can they be mended, Maud?" she asked quickly.

The shoemaker stood contentedly looking at the things. The flickering gaslight fell full on his face. He had a little lock of hair that curled rising straight up from the middle of his forehead, and a faintly-grey moustache shading the eyes followed the lines of his nose. His fingers touched them here and there, and he looked at the girl with a little smile. "You want them?" he asked.

Her face lightened. "I'm sure I do," she said.

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their very frailties pleased him. "We'll put new soles on them and half-heels, and a little patch here—it will hardly show when it is done. When do you need them?" he asked again. He looked at her over his light glasses.

"Saturday—? Could I have them Saturday?"

"Saturday afternoon," he nodded slowly, "about four o'clock, I should think. Yes, we'll get them done for you."

He carried them across to his bench and the girl went out. There was a little lingering tingle of the bell above the door, but the shoemaker did not look up; his eyes were on the shoes in his hand, studying their possibilities . . . he was deaf to the world. Across the room a new game of checkers had begun between the grey beard and Jove, but the shoemaker did not look up—a kind of gentle light had come into his face and a little line ran in his forehead, straight up to the lock of hair; so a poet might scan his lines, seeking the right word. . . . The shoemaker's face held the worn soles and turned

them from him and looked at them and broke into gentle singing—a little gentle humming beneath his breath. His hand reached out for a sharp knife, and the sound of softly-cut stitches followed its sharp edge along the sole.

The assistant put his head in the door and surveyed the silent group and came in—his face a trifle lighter under its grime. He hung up his hat and crossed the room—"Letter for ye," he said. He threw it down on the bench—but the shoemaker did not look up, and the softly-ripping stitches went swiftly on.

The assistant sat down and drew the iron last between his knees and took up his hammer; *rat-ty-tat—rat-ty-tat-tat—rat-ty-tat*—and softly snipping stitches—and somewhere on the wall a clock ticking a little when the hammering was still.

It was a place where nothing could ever happen; the letter lay on the shoemaker's bench, the two men played an eternal game of checkers, across the room, the assistant made shoes, and the shoemaker with his face to a pair of shabby

NOTHING COULD HAPPEN 7

soles saw something beautiful beyond them emerging from the worn shapes—something that should be as good as new . . . rat-ty-tat—rat-ty-tat-*tat!*

II

IT HAPPENS

THE town-clock struck six, and the shoemaker looked up, and blinked; the assistant with his hammer half-lifted for another stroke, laid it down with a little happy thud. The checker-players stirred vaguely, looked at the clock absently and, with the round black-and-white spots before them, went on reaching into blind space.

The shoemaker's eye fell on the letter and he took it up.

The assistant's eye followed it—"From John, ain't it?" he asked.

"Yes." The shoemaker moved over to the gas-jet and adjusted his glasses a little; he could see to cut the finest stitches in the dark—but not a letter from John.

The assistant lingered a little. He and John had been schoolboys together. There might be something interesting. John was getting to be

a big man. The assistant was very fat and he did not understand exactly what it was that John was doing—but at school he had licked John, easy—John was a little fellow those days. The assistant played with the strings of his apron.

The shoemaker spelled out the words with gentle, half-moving lips, and the checker-players pushed back the board and got up. The big man straightened himself in sections—"Got a letter?" he asked kindly.

The grey beard moved nimbly. "I beat him!" he said; "I beat him *that* time!"

The big man smiled at him tolerantly.

The shoemaker lowered his glasses with his finger and looked over the top at them. "A letter from John," he said.

"Uh-huh—How's John getting on?" The big man was genial.

But the shoemaker had returned to the letter. "Well—well!" he said softly. "Well—*well!*"

The room quickened a little. The assistant put down his hat and waited.

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The shoemaker took off his glasses and rubbed them slowly and looked at the other three with a little quiet smile—"John wants me to go to Europe," he said.

"Go where?" said Simon vaguely. He rubbed his little beard and gulped.

The shoemaker nodded. "Right off; he says he's got the passage engaged; he wants us to go the fifteenth—a week from Saturday." His eye fell on the shoes lying side by side on his bench and he smiled at them. "I must hurry my shoes."

"You going?" asked the big man.

"I think we'll go—yes—if John wants us to. I've always thought I'd like to go—abroad——"

"Well!" said Simon. He sat down a little quickly. "Kind o' sudden, ain't it—your goin' abroad!"

The assistant scraped a foot along the floor and the shoemaker looked at him and smiled. "Do you think you can manage the business, Samuel—for a year or so?"

"A year!" The assistant gulped, and looked

at the row of awls stuck in their leather straps along the window-ledge. "You goin' to be gone a year?" he repeated dully. The very awls looked different, somehow.

"John says a year. Here is what he says." He read it out slowly——

I want you and Mother to stay six months or so in England. You'll know the language and can get along all right there; and then, next summer, I am to have three months—my first vacation in ten years, you know—and I'll come over and join you, and we'll go to the continent together.

"John can speak several languages," said the shoemaker, breaking off with gentle pride. "He learned them at college—German and French and Italian and Spanish. I only know one language."

"It's enough to say all you can think of, too——" said the big man. He was a little moved on his base by this sudden irruption of travel.

The shoemaker looked about him. "I must go and tell Mother," he said; "she'll want to get

used to it." He nodded kindly to the fat assistant, who was staring at the row of awls, his thick under-lip moving in and out slowly. "You think about it, Samuel. It won't be so bad when you think it over—you can do it."

"Oh, yes, you can do it," said the big man reassuringly. "I'll look in and advise you about it, every day or two."

"I beat him, that last game," said Simon happily. "You see, I——"

But the shoemaker had put on his hat and was gone. The big man was already looming away down the dusk of the street, and the assistant stood with one hand on the gas-jet, ready to shut up shop.

Simon skipped out into the dusk. The assistant closed the door and locked it and turned slowly away. Over the door the faded sign,

ANTHONY WICKHAM

MAKER AND MENDER OF SHOES

looked out faintly on the half-lit street. The sign had hung there thirty years, worn by

wind and rain and pointing the way inside to the low bench where Anthony Wickham sat stitching on the worn-out shoes of Bolton—making them “good as new.”

The fat assistant wagged his head distrustfully and plodded down the street . . . his round, rolling gait bearing him on. “I can’t do it——” he mumbled. “I ain’t fit! I can’t do fine work like he can.”

And overhead the stars twinkled out—on the assistant, and on Simon scurrying home through the dusk, swelling with happy pride, and on the big man who did not care that he was beaten, and on Anthony, maker and mender of shoes, going slowly under the stars, looking up at them now and then, and looking around him. Thirty years he had waited, stitching his vision into leather and thread—and now the great world door swung softly open before him. . . .

III

MOTHER

HE laid the letter on the table and looked at her with a long, slow, happy smile.

She took it up swiftly—"From John!" she said. She eyed it a minute and laid it down. "You must have your supper first."

She bustled about, carrying things to the table, talking briskly as she moved. She was a little woman, her head barely reaching the shoemaker's shoulder when she stood still beside him for a minute; but when she moved she seemed to rise on little springs as if suddenly, all over, she was set free.

Anthony watched her with his quiet smile as she came and went in her flittings. "Sit down, Mother," he said, "you've got everything we need."

"Yes," a little breathless with achievement, "it's ready now—as soon as I take out my pie!"

She opened the oven door and looked in cautiously and took out a fragrant pie.

Anthony's eye followed it. "Apple?" he asked.

She nodded and set it slowly on the table. "It got done a little mite too much," she said. She was looking regretfully at the brown, mottled crust.

"Just about right for me," said Anthony.

Her face relaxed. "Men-folks'll eat pie—apple-pie—no matter how it's done," she said. She poured out the tea, one eye on the letter beside. "What does he say?" she asked.

"Good news," said Anthony. He sipped his tea tentatively and watched her, smiling.

She took up the letter and began on it—and laid it down—and looked at him. "John's crazy!" she said. Then, after a minute—"I don't *want* to go!"

"You'll like it," said Anthony.

"To go abroad! I should *hate* to go abroad!" she said swiftly.

"Why, Mother!"

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"Don't talk to me, Anthony!—I should hate it. You ready for your pie?" She cut a generous piece and put it on his plate and watched critically as his mouth closed on the first morsel.

He nodded slowly. "Just right, Mother."

A little smile quivered on her face. "You know I shouldn't like it, don't you, Anthony—going abroad?"

"It takes time—to get used to going abroad." He was looking wistfully at the letter.

"I shall stay right here—" she said, "and save the money. . . . *You* can go," she added, looking at him.

He shook his head slowly. "*I* can't go without *you*, Mother."

There was silence between them. The canary under his blue cloth, settled down for the night, chirped a little; but there was no response. Anthony waited patiently for the workings of the feminine mind.

When she had finished the dishes she came and sat down beside him. A little fire glowed

in the grate. . . . She slipped her hand under the thin one lying along the arm of the chair.

"John will be disappointed," she said softly.

"Yes." He patted the hand a little.

She looked into the fire. "He ought to get married," she said.

"Give him time," answered the shoemaker.

"He's never saved a cent," she said sternly, "and now to waste two thousand dollars—on *us!* I'd rather he'd get married!"

He patted the hand again. "You can't exactly get married—like that—by handing around two thousand dollars," he said.

"I know, well enough, what I mean, Anthony, and you know, too. . . . There *must* be some nice girls—" She studied the fire.

"Lydia Bacon?" suggested the shoemaker.

"Anthony—Wickham! For *John!*"

The shoemaker chuckled—a quiet little chuckle, like the coals falling in the grate. "Do you know anybody that would suit you better than Lydia?" he asked respectfully.

She paused. "No-o—" she admitted. "But

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that's no reason you should think of her!" She sniffed at the glowing coals softly. "We will write him to-night and tell him to save his money and get married—and take some comfort in life!" she finished up.

"Very well, Mother. You write him. Tell him just how you feel about it."

So the letter went, and the answer came promptly back. The tickets were bought, John wrote. But if they really did not want them he would sell them at a sacrifice—underlined—and give the money to the Baptist Church.

"To the Baptist Church?" she quivered with anxious face. "Doesn't he remember we are Congregationalists?"

"He wants us to go," said Anthony. "He isn't thinking about much else, I guess."

The letter had been addressed to Mr. Anthony Wickham and had come to the shop. But the following day a letter came to Mrs. Anthony Wickham, which the shoemaker did not see.

She read it, standing by the stove in her sunny

kitchen, the canary trilling a little among his geraniums and plants in the window.

"I've been thinking about Father," the letter read—"There was something about him that last time I was home, something about his face that set me thinking, Mother. . . ." She had slipped the bit of paper inside her dress, and when Anthony came home at night she had gone up to him and put her hands on his shoulders and looked up at him a long minute. Then she had lifted her face to kiss him.

"I don't know *where* I can buy a good steam-er-trunk," she said.

IV

GETS READY

THERE was hurry and scurry and debate. The canary must be boarded out, and the geraniums and plants taken care of, and the attic and cellar scrubbed from top to toe. Upstairs and downstairs and in my lady's chamber, there was bustle and confusion and the clutter of household gods.

Through it all, Mother—her head tied up in a large towel, a magic broom-wand in her hand—moved serene. Order must be restored by the fourteenth; and precisely at four o'clock of the fourteenth the house was ready. It had been rented to the new milkman who had just moved to Bolton and had one child and a nice little wife—there were three loaves of bread and a nice pie in the pantry for the milkman and his nice wife and baby, a little heap of kindlings in the shed, and the bed with its starched pillow-

shams and white spread was made up ready for them in the chamber overhead.

Once she had surrendered, Mother had taken entire charge of the campaign; she had made it her own. Anthony was not allowed to pack his trunk or to select the clothes he should wear.

"You take care of the shop," she had said, fairly bustling him out, "I'll see to things here."

So Anthony had sat quietly stitching away—his new hopes and new plans into the old leather and soles.

There had been a sudden influx of trade when the Bolton "Herald" announced that Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Wickham were sailing on the fifteenth. All the old shoes and slippers and boots in Bolton poured in upon him. They lay heaped up between him and the fat assistant; and the assistant scowled at them and drew his heavy needle in and out.

"You couldn't finish 'em by Christmas—not if you worked nights!" he said, resentfully.

"I'm picking out the worst ones, Samuel,"

said the shoemaker, bending to the pile and selecting, ruefully, a crazy old slipper. "These slippers of Mrs. Judge Fox's, now—I've mended these twenty years, I should think—first tops and then bottoms and then tops and bottoms both. . . . I tell Mis' Fox, slippers are like folks—wearin' a little here and a little there, and getting new stuff all the while as they go along—and growing a little bigger, too," he said softly, smiling down at the queer shapes.

Samuel stared at them gloomily. "You can't do anything with Mrs. Judge Fox's, ever—chuck 'em!"

But the shoemaker smiled at them still, and ran his fingers along their faults slowly—"I think we can—do a little—a little something—with them—" he said musingly, and the old leather seemed to respond to the touch and lift itself a little. "They've lost their shape—that's all, Samuel. Plenty of wear—plenty——"

He murmured indistinct words and drew out the insoles and peered at them and breathed a little breath, and fell to work; his thin fingers

dwelt upon the ugly lines and drew away with deft touch, and the bulging old slippers caught the idea, and seemed to forget Mrs. Judge Fox and her burden of flesh—and became, once more, slippers. The shoemaker laid them down on the bench beside him with a little, happy gesture, and glanced across at the assistant.

Samuel gave a grudging look. "Yes—you've done 'em. But if I could do fine work like you can, I wouldn't waste myself on a pair of old things like them!"

Now, it happened that Mrs. Judge Fox died that year, and while she lay dying the slippers stood by her bed, and her eye fell on them and she half reached down a hand to them. "They lasted my time out—" she said, half-whispering. "I'm glad they last—" And she forgot to say good-bye to the old Judge who sat by her crying his few, hard tears. . . . The dying think of trivial things.

The fat assistant worked on with stodgy unending patience and gloom, but the pile on the floor between them did not diminish; it grew

ever larger, and each morning more shoes were added to it—until even Anthony Wickham acknowledged that it would not be possible to finish them.

And not only shoes took up the time. There was consultation and advice to be gone through with also. Anthony came at last to sitting with the geography open on the bench beside him and talking with one finger on the page and one on his last. The checker-board in the corner grew thick with dust. The big man gave advice, and Simon questioned it—rubbing his little grey beard; and politics, sociology, race lines, language, etiquette, seasickness, foreign money, feeling, fleas, boarding houses, horse-meat and snails for food were carefully threshed out and disposed of.

The big man sat, ponderous and wise, and gave advice on all. Simon skipped nimbly from peak to peak of incredulity. And the shoemaker lifted his smiling glance or pushed up his spectacles and wrinkled his brow at the information they gave him. "I think Mother will

see about that," he would say when the battle waxed too hot for him.

There were other visitors who came with advice—and shoes.

The Episcopal rector brought a pair of thin, low ties and seated himself in a casual chair while Anthony inspected them. He studied them, and turned them in his hand and looked up, smiling—as if at some pleasant discovery.

"You run them over in the heel," he said, pointing to the iron nails that protruded at the back through the low heels, shining and blunt.

"Yes, I walk a great deal," said the Rector. "I like exercise. Walking is my favourite method of locomotion. . . . Um—you do not walk—much——?"

Anthony shook his head. "Home and back twice a day is my walking," he said.

"Yes—yes—of course. But I hear you are going quite a journey—quite a journey."

Anthony looked up, pleased and friendly, and the conversation glided into the well-worn groove—how to travel, where to travel, what to

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wear, what to see, the pictures one must not miss, and the cathedrals. . . .

The fat assistant was having a liberal education without stirring from his leather-strewn bench. In spite of his best intentions, his ears were filled with Madonnas and tombs and gateways that he could have recited in his dreams if he had been pressed.

The Rector sent in another pair of shoes and a list of Madonnas that Mother must be sure to see; and Mother tucked them away in the little black reticule that was fast becoming as crowded as the assistant's head, and went on with her work. The Baptist minister made out a bicycle trip in lower Sussex—one that he had read in a book—and the pastor of the Presbyterian Church contributed notes on the orthodox churches of London.

The shoemaker had become a person of importance. A prospective trip to Europe while not the same as the ordinary Divinity school education, was in a way its social equivalent. A shoemaker who proposed to go abroad—or

whose son proposed it for him—was not the same as a shoemaker who merely made and mended shoes; he became an opportunity.

All his life Anthony Wickham had known all Bolton by its feet—there was hardly a man, woman or child in Bolton whom he would not have known by their shoes, there was scarcely one that he would not have known in the dark by the mere feeling of their feet under the touch of his thin fingers. Many of them he had followed from boyhood to manhood, seeing the quick, boyish soles broaden and harden and throw out little callous lumps—that must be reckoned with if one made a shoe that should fit. He knew them all. Sometimes it seemed to him that the character of men lies in their feet rather than in their heads; and he always looked first, a long slow glance, at a man's shoes—before he lifted his gentle eyes to the face above them and read what was hidden there.

In and out through the little shop, for thirty years, Bolton had come and gone, and the little bell overhead had tingled for them; children

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with ball or hoop and a pair of shoes—they had skipped in, and out; old men and women, bent with saving and distrust; for the rich and the poor and the just and the unjust the little bell had tingled; and each of them had held out to Anthony Wickham, maker and mender, a pair of old shoes. To them all he was the man who mended them.

But now he had become a certain Mr. Wickham—not quite “our respected fellow townsman,” perhaps, but a “very intelligent man.” It had not seemed strange to Bolton that he should save and scrimp and send his son to college—on scraps and shreds of leather, as it were. It was the good old New England custom—to give the boy a chance—and no one found it worth a comment or thought. But that the son should turn about and send his parents abroad! This was at once picturesque and strange—and the pile of shoes on the floor grew higher, the scowl on Samuel’s countenance deepened; and Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Wickham took the four o’clock train for New York.

V

TO MEET JOHN

"I do hope John will meet us." It was the tenth time she had hoped it, and for the tenth time Anthony had assured her that John would surely be there—he wouldn't miss them.

The train drew into the long shed. The passengers descended and John gathered the little woman under his arm.

"I knew you'd be here!" she said, triumphant.

"Yes, I'm here. How about your baggage?" He squeezed the hand a little and tucked it closer under his arm.

Anthony produced checks and tags and papers, and the three mingled with the crowd pouring across the platform.

Half an hour later they were in a great hotel, high up in the air, facing each other and talking. John had arranged everything, it seemed; he had provided Baedekers and handbooks

without end. They were to go first to a little English hotel near Trafalgar Square—kept in the old fashion; he gave them the address, which Mother tucked carefully away in her bag. They were to stay at this hotel as long as they liked. Later they could look up rooms, if they wanted; it would be a way of seeing London—looking up rooms.

“Rooms will be cheaper, won’t they?” said Mother.

“Cheaper? Yes—See here, Mother, I don’t want you to think about things being cheaper; just go ahead—and have a good time not thinking about things being cheaper.”

She nodded at him sagely. “I don’t need to spend *all* your money—to have a good time,” she said.

He laughed out. “Well, I do. I mean to spend part of it right here in New York. Now what would you like to see best, Mother—of all New York—before you sail?”

“Grant’s tomb,” said Mother promptly.

“Mother!”

"Grant's tomb," she repeated firmly. "We've got to see a good many tombs over there," she touched the little black bag, "and I want to see how ours compare."

"All right—you shall see all the tombs in New York! But you can't see them to-night." He thought a minute. "How would you like to go to a play?"

She glanced quickly at Anthony. The shoemaker returned the look, smiling. "We're travelling, Mother," he said.

But she shook her head. "You can travel all you like, Anthony—and John can travel! I shall stay right here!" She took firm hold of the arms of her chair.

Anthony chuckled a little.

"But a play's all right, Mother! There's a good one at The Lyceum—one of Barrie's. Barrie wrote 'The Little Minister,' you know," said John.

But Mother swam serenely away. "I don't *feel* like seeing a play," she said. "How much does it cost?"

Anthony interposed a gentle voice. "I don't think you'll get Mother started to-night, John. But you and I might go——?"

Her son looked at her, and she smiled back happily. "That's right! You and Father go! Then you can tell me about it at breakfast. I'd like that better than going myself."

Her face was a little guilty under its meekness, and there was a twinkle in her son's eye as he bent and kissed her.

Mother's economies had always amused him even as a small boy in trousers too long for him, and later as a big boy in trousers too short for him. There was always a little artistic flourish that went with Mother's economies that set them in a class by themselves. She economised for sheer love of it . . . the money she saved was a mere by-product.

But he looked a little meaningly at her as he said, "I want the trip to be a real change for you—and for Father."

"It's going to be a change—a terrible change, for both of us, John," she said cheerfully.

"Now you go and get ready for your play, and I'll fix things a little."

She bustled about, unpacking their bags and making the rooms homelike for the night.

The bathroom appalled her at first. She had tiptoed in and looked at it, and came out with sober face. It was only when John assured her that there were thousands of them in New York—that in this particular hotel you would have hard work to get a room without a bath, that she had accepted it. But once accepted, she revelled in it. She arranged tooth-brushes and soap, and went in and out merely to look again on the porcelain-lined elegance and comfort.

To Anthony the elegance seemed to come as a matter of course. His thin figure seemed to grow a little taller and the forward droop of his shoulders lifted itself. The son watched him with wistful eyes. He had always known that his father was not like other men, quite. Sometimes he would wake in the night and see the thin, distinguished figure bending over its

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pair of shoes, stitching steadily—and it cut him like a knife.

John was a big man and the place that was making for him in the world of iron and steel was bigger than most people knew; but he had only one wish—to give to Anthony Wickham the chance of life that he had missed. . . . He might have grasped his chance—the son knew the story and was proud of it—how he had taken the first thing at hand when his father died and had helped brothers and sisters, one after the other, to an education—stitching until he could not stop. A man does not change at sixty years. And John Wickham, as he grew up, had it always in mind—some day his father should take a rest. . . . He looked at him now, leaning back against the tawdry hotel chair, his hands a little relaxed, his eyes half-closed—the face had the quietness that goes with strength, a quiet, quizzical face that had looked on the world, without judging it, for sixty years.

When his son looked away his eyes were filled

with quick tears. He got up and went over to his mother and touched her gently.

“I’ll get the tickets, and we’ll have supper sent up here,” he said; “it will seem like home.”

VI

VAUDEVILLE

THE Broadway night hummed and sparkled and flashed its bulbs at them—taxis flew past unendingly—the crowd pushed a little, and swayed, and caught a rhythm beating, far beneath, and swung to it—for no man liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself. . . . Anthony Wickham touched his son's arm—"So many feet!" he said quietly, smiling.

And the son smiled back—"And all going!" he said. "Do you like it, Father?"

But Anthony's eyes were on the crowd—chatter and hum, the touch of feet on stone, the flitter of feet and flowing tide and the look of swift-turning eyes . . . and a great white light above—below—around. The son slipped a hand beneath his arm and they moved as a unit in the swinging mass; the crowd drew them, sucked them in, and they opened to it—the

great pulse swinging them, lifting them, the mighty, thrilling human pulse and a thousand trampling feet on the pavements.

"Here we are!" said the son.

They had turned into a great entrance at the left, and went up the long, lighted stairs.

"It's vaudeville," said John; "I thought some of it would interest you."

"Everything interests me," said Anthony Wickham.

They had passed through softly-swinging doors at the top and were looking down into the half-lighted house, with the dimness and shadowy forms here and there.

"We're early," said John. "You'll have a chance to see them come in. You'll like that?"

"I shall like to see them come in—and I shall like to get my breath," said Anthony.

"Did we come too fast?" His son looked at him quickly.

"Not too fast for my legs, I guess—but a little fast for my head——"

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"I know. You have to get geared to it. I didn't think!"

"That's what you call it—geared to it?" He held the words with pleased interest.

"Like a machine, you know—high gear and low gear——"

"I see. New York takes a rather high gear, doesn't it, Son?"

"Rather high, I should think," assented John. "There are people, you know, who think it's *too* high, people who won't live here at all—they come on visits!"

"Like me," said Anthony.

"Not like you," said the son quickly. "You were a part of it—?" He was looking at him, smiling through the dimness.

And Anthony caught the look and held it. "I felt as if I were the whole of it," he said, smiling, "the whole crowd, you know!"

"Yes, I know. That's the fine thing about a crowd—gives you such a new, big feeling. I know—I've felt it myself. . . . I want to tell

you something, Father——” He settled a little in his seat and bent nearer to him. “There’s something I want you to do for me, over there, in London.”

Anthony smiled a little. “Better ask Mother, wouldn’t we?” he said.

“Mother can’t do it,” said John quickly, “—It’s one of the few things Mother couldn’t do. But she would spoil this. She mustn’t even know.” He looked at him.

“Very well.” The shoemaker waited.

“It’s about Wallace—Wallace Tilton, you know——” said John. “I’m worried about him.”

“About Wally—Tilton——Where is he now?” asked Anthony.

“He’s in London—and I guess he’s going the pace over there.”

“He always was hard on his shoes,” said Anthony smiling.

“Well, he’s hard on them now. The Company’s beginning to take notice. They won’t

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say anything; but presently somebody else will be in Wally's shoes—unless we can stop him." He was looking at his father.

Anthony looked about him at the great vaguely-lighted place with its tiers rising to the roof. "What can I do, John?" he asked.

"I don't know, Father. But if Wallace Tilton goes to the bad, I'll never forgive myself. He gave me my start, you know. I couldn't stand it to go on prospering and have Wallace Tilton mud!"

The lights flashed up around them, the orchestra tuned a little—crowds streamed in, down the aisle—slamming seats, flying ushers, up the aisle and back. The orchestra broke out into a gay little tune—everybody talked—the fire curtain rolled slowly up. Anthony Wickham watched it all with slow, smiling eyes; and his son watched Anthony Wickham.

Presently the father turned to him. "I'll do what I can, John, about Wally—you know that? But I'm afraid it won't be much. I'm not very clever, you know."

“Bother cleverness!” said John. “It’s folks, Wallace wants—home folks; he’s forgot who he is and where he came from. You and Mother will do him good—good all through. What he needs is apple-pie, a good, big piece of apple-pie—the kind that Mother used to make.”

“Mother’ll do him good,” said Anthony; “she’s like good fresh rain—and the sun—and sky.”

“But she mustn’t know,” said John quickly. “She’d take to doing him good and saving him, if she knew.”

“We mustn’t let Mother save him,” said Anthony. “I shouldn’t want to be saved by Mother myself,” he said, chuckling a little.

The house about them had grown slowly dark; the music quickened to softly-dancing steps; the great inner curtain rolled up. Into a maze of coloured lights and flowers and gauzy, shifting scenes a fairy on tiptoes floated and held herself—and drifted away into the fire-lit trees. Anthony Wickham’s face followed her—followed the dancing feet and light-hung move-

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ment—the weaving, drifting, careless grace; he drew a little, quick breath, and murmured to himself.

John's eye ran to him. He leaned forward. "Did you ever see anything just like it, Father?" he said, smiling.

Anthony's face, through the dim gloom, turned to him vaguely. "I've felt like it—always," he said.

John laughed softly. "That's it! We've all felt like it—in a dream!"

"In a dream——" said Anthony.

"Hush-sh-h!" The quick-dancing figure had come again—out of her dreams—all the lights of the world playing upon her, swinging, swirling, lifting, drifting, fast and faster, whirl of swift-flung spray, and winding, fire-lit cloud . . . and quickened breath. The curtain came down and went up again and again—hands beat upon hands. . . . The house swung to the dancing feet. Three thousand people, heavy and dumb, had danced upon the fire-lit stage—and hand beat on hand. . . . The curtain came slowly

down—the lights flashed out; tired faces, under their painted shells, looked out about them vaguely—smiling at the pretty thing they had seen.

“What was it like?” asked Mother at the breakfast table.

VII

MOTHER'S OPINIONS

JOHN had reserved a table for them in the bay-window and through the transparent curtains they could see the glimpses of flowers and silver, and waiters passing to and fro, with noiseless feet. Their own waiter had placed the breakfast on the table and withdrawn just outside, and through the filmy curtain Mother could see his shoulder and a huge, hanging hand. She sat behind her coffee-urn, erect and competent, a smile behind her round glasses.

“What was it like?” she repeated.

John glanced at his father—and Anthony returned the glance, smiling.

“It was vaudeville, you know, Mother,” said John.

“Yes—what is vaudeville like?” She was putting in the lumps deftly—three for John and two for his father.

"All sorts of things," said John slowly. "Vaudeville——there was dancing, you know, and singing and——"

"Dancing——!" said Mother. She was looking at Anthony.

He took his coffee and stirred it and smiled at her. "It was very pretty, Mother." His eyes seemed to be following a drifting figure through the filmy curtain. Mother half turned. She looked reproachfully at John. "I really ought to have gone with him," she said.

"You would have liked it, Mother," he replied. He was smiling at the utter roundness of her face and its softly-puckered lines. "You would have liked it. It wasn't the least like what you are seeing in your mind."

"I am not seeing anything in my mind," she declared. But a swift flush ran over the round face—and left it blank.

John laughed out. "Ask Father to tell you about it, on the boat. It would take too long now—and besides there are a thousand things to settle. I've brought your letter of credit,

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Father—" He held out a paper and Anthony took it in slow, pleased fingers. "It's made out on the London Provincial Bank. You deposit it with them, and then you'd better open an account there, wouldn't you?"

"You tell me about that, John," said Mother meaningly.

"I'll tell you both—it's simple—" He drew a small, dark-red book from his pocket and opened it. "This is my cheque-book—see—I set down here what I put in—and here, on the right, what I spend—and then add them, and subtract, and balance at the bottom of each page—and put the balance at the top of the next page, you see—and so on." He ran the pages lightly between his fingers—"Here's the draft I drew for the letter of credit."

Mother's eyes were glued to it. "A thousand dollars," she whispered. "It's too much, John!" Her eyes sought the shoulder just outside the lace curtain. "You'd better give it to me, Anthony—" she said.

But John interposed. "It's in Father's name—" he was smiling a little—"and it has a description of Father in it. It wouldn't do for a little, round person like you, Mother!"

Her face fell a little. "How do we open an account?" she asked.

"They'll show you over there." He was going over his list swiftly. "Now here are your tickets and some English change—you'll need it for your cab, and so on—and here is some American money for fees on the boat——"

"For what?" said Mother.

"Fees—on the boat; you pay you know——"

"What for?" said Mother.

"Why for—for fees—" John began at the beginning and explained carefully the system of transatlantic tariff, and Mother's face grew rounder and sadder as she listened; it screwed itself in little wrinkles as she looked at him—trying to understand.

"What did you say we give the man on the deck?" she asked.

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"The deck-steward?—Oh, a couple of dollars. I'll put it in this envelope—" he handed it across to Anthony.

"What does the deck-steward do?" asked Mother quickly.

"You get your chairs of him, you know——"

"Oh, it's for the chairs—a kind of rent." Her face cleared.

But Anthony's slow fingers were going over the envelopes on the table beside him. "Here's another marked 'deck-steward,'" he said, holding it up.

John looked at it, helplessly. "That is for the chairs," he said, "when you first go on— Give it here. I'll see about them before you start. That makes one less bother for you." He replaced the money in his purse.

Mother's eyes followed it, relieved. "Then we don't have to give the deck-steward anything?" she said happily.

"Yes, I've got it here—'deck-steward,'" read Anthony.

She looked at it despairingly. Then she wrinkled at John.

"He carries your chair around for you—" said John.

"I'll carry it," she said promptly. "Father'll carry it for me." She beamed on Father.

John groaned a little. "You understand it, don't you, Father?"

"Yes; I'm to give the deck-steward this—" He touched the envelope on the table before him, "when we get there?"

"Yes. Here's a book I got—that gives a general estimate of fees."

"You mean, John Wickham, that we've got to keep on doing this every day—dealing out little dribbles of money to folks—for nothing?"

"Oh, they do things for you——"

"I don't want it!" She pushed the helpful little book aside. "I'm not going! I'd rather stay right here!"

A twinkle came into John's eye. "It will cost a lot more to stay here than to go, I'm

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afraid," he said. His eye was on the shoulder, just outside the filmy curtain, and on the large arm that depended from the shoulder, and on the huge hand at the end of the arm.

"We don't do things like that here!" said Mother. She eyed the innocent book scornfully.

"I'm afraid we do—and worse," said John softly. The fingers of the huge hand worked back and forth a little and twiddled themselves. "And worse!" said John.

Mother looked at him helplessly. "You mean you've got to do it here—in this hotel—in New York!"

"Right here," said John.

She gave a little gasp. "I'm going home!" she said. She turned to Anthony. "You hadn't ought to have let me, Father," she said reproachfully.

Anthony's eyes rested on her, half-compassionate, and very gentle and amused. "I didn't understand it myself, Mother—not really understand it. They tried to explain it to me in the

shop one day; but I didn't get it clear in my mind. John's made it very clear."

"Oh, it's clear! That's the trouble with it!" said Mother.

There was silence in the window. . . . The son looked at her and smiled—"I don't want to urge you, Mother; but it will be hard for Father—he always depends on you so."

She glanced at him quickly.

Anthony looked across to her. "I do need you, Mother," he said softly.

"You needn't think I shall stay here and let you go alone, Anthony. I know more about your needing me than you do," she said. She brushed the crumbs from her lap and stood up. "Did you have our baggage all brought down?" she asked.

She sailed through the filmy curtains without a glance at the huge hand hanging just outside; and, fortunately, she did not see the good, round, solid piece of silver that dropped into it as John went by.

VIII

ON TRAVEL

THE boat-train to London filled slowly. Tilbury Dock was alive in the darkness with the pushing, jostling crowd; porters wheeling heavy trunks piled with luggage, leaned upon the darkness and trundled down the platform. The crowd parted and swayed and moved slowly along with them—toward the train.

In the midst of it, there was Anthony, holding close to his umbrella, and Mother, holding tight to Anthony's arm—her bonnet a little askew and her face puckered in its lines. It had not entered into Mother's plans of foreign travel to arrive in England by night, and she felt herself borne on an unknown tide into a moist blackness. Somewhere beyond it lay London and a place to sleep—perhaps. Out in the Thames, in the deeper, thicker darkness behind, the *Minnetonka* was at anchor. Through the half-twi-

light, she had crept up the river—a thunderstorm, with its murky light, playing strange uncanny antics on the clouds. Red, mysterious sails had dropped down to meet them and had hovered curiously about; great steamships had passed silently, or had loomed against the sky with their anchors fast in Thames mud. Tiny lights had gleamed out, red lights, green lights, yellow lights—a whole world of lights—on the shore and on boats, growing thicker as the great boat crowded up the river and came to anchor in midstream.

Mother, in her stateroom, gathering up the few last articles, had peered out of her porthole at the magnificent rolling sky, and at the sheets of fine rain that drove between. . . . She had watched the little red sails hover about, and the great motionless hulks of steamers loom past—and she had drawn a quick home-sick breath and tied on her bonnet with fingers that trembled a little. . . . She had been prepared for London and its roar and hurry of streets, but not for this strange, unsheltered vastness on the edge

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of space—that she was told was England. . . . It was all a vague, confused dream. She hoped Anthony had the tickets, and his keys safe—and that Somebody knew where they were going. Then she opened her stateroom door and stepped valiantly out—and climbed down the steamer's side into the tender that waited. . . .

Anthony patted the hand that lay on his arm. "We're here, Mother—" he said.

"Where do you suppose they have put the trunks, Anthony?" she replied swiftly.

"I'll go and see," said Anthony, and slipped away.

"Anthony!" she gasped . . . but there was only the moving kaleidoscope of faces and blackness and twinkling lights.

Somebody bundled her into a carriage. . . . Suppose he did not find her? How could he remember where he had left her—going off like that among perfectly strange people! She grasped the little bag tight. . . . There must be some place—some place for people to go who were lost—whose husbands were lost.

A strange man put his head in the door—"Room enough in here," he said, "come on—just one woman——"

He placed his bag on the seat by Mother and she screwed her courage tight. "My husband is going to sit there—if he comes back——" she said timidly.

The man glared at her and turned back to the door. "Better go on—more room farther down," he said to some one behind, and they surged away. And Mother was alone with her little black bag—the only thing in England that she had ever seen before.

Bells rang—shouting and slamming of doors, and running feet. A man put his head in. "Tickets!" he said.

Mother gulped. "I haven't any—husband!" she said softly.

There was a flying mist, a smile behind him, and Anthony slid in—and the door slammed. Wheels grumbled a little and turned softly, the platform began to move—faces passed and slipped off into the blackness. Mother, search-

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ing in her black bag for her handkerchief, saw them blur and run away.

Anthony turned, with his gentle smile—"All right, Mother?"

"Don't you ever leave me again, Anthony Wickham—not for one minute! I might have been lost."

"But you couldn't be lost in a train—Mother!"

"You can't tell what might be," said Mother, putting the handkerchief back in her bag, and snapping it close. "It's different in England—everything's different!"

"Yes—we're going to see new things every day now," assented Anthony, glancing at the black window flying by.

Mother made no response. For six days lying in her berth, too weak to move, she had watched, through the clumsy porthole, the sky go by and a great sick green wave lifting itself and sidling away into the treacherous sea; for six days she had listened to the walls of her stateroom, creaking, whispering, relaxing—like a fat woman in

corsets; for six days the making of a new heaven and a new earth had gone on. No need to tell Mother she was going to see new things; her life had dissolved—melted away into the mists that drifted by the brass-rimmed porthole, or wiped in furtive ashamed tears from her face. Anthony did not see the tears; he never once caught the handkerchief drying forlornly on the edge of its berth; and to all his cheerful enquiries there was the same plucky, wrinkled-up assurance—“Yes, feeling better, thank you—but not quite like getting up to-day.”

It seemed, in some ways, a pity that Anthony should not have been the one to succumb to the sea; for Anthony had a dozen remedies—a dozen of them and more. Each of the ministers had given him, with the list of Madonnas and tombs and gateways, an infallible remedy; they had not tried it themselves, but each had it from some reliable source; and it was absolutely infallible—absolutely. They had given him also vivid accounts of their state of being on ship-board—all of which they might have been spared

if they had known beforehand of the one infallible . . . Anthony, secure in gentleness of soul, had not needed the remedy; and Mother's state of being was so unlike those described by his infallible advisers that Anthony had not recognised it.

So Mother had worried through as best she could; and she was entering valiantly and forlornly upon a new year in which everything was going to be different. . . . She crept a little closer into her shell and steadied herself against the jolting of the train, and nodded, half asleep—one hand clasped tight in Anthony's, lest he should slip away again, and she should—be—lost. . . . The train jolted into her slumbers and knit them and gathered them up—and she was back in Bolton and the canary was singing in his cage and the geraniums in blossom in the window.

But Anthony, sitting erect beside her, held by the motion of the quick-running train, was not thinking of Bolton. His mind ran ahead to the streets and the people that waited for him.

He had not known, sitting at his bench, mending shoes, how much he longed for people. There had always been Simon to talk to, and the big man and Samuel—but they said the same things over and over; and Anthony's mind, travelling into new worlds and coming back, alive with thought, had met always the same old answers—the same fly-specked, dreary round of conjecture and assurance. But now, for six days, he had lived . . . a Scientist, leaning on the rail of the boat, with his back to the sea, had talked to him of opsonin and entropy; a Doctor of Divinity had presented him with "Q"; a Syndicalist, moving in continental grooves, had held the world by the throat for him and shaken it with long vindictive fingers till gold and silver dropped from its pockets and rolled on the deck before them, and Anthony and the Syndicalist had only to stoop and gather them up by handfuls—but they would not even stoop—the Capitalist should pick it up for them, and present it, hat in hand, and say, "Thank you, sir." And the Syndicalist had paced the deck, his hat

off, his hair ruffled by the breeze of heaven and his own lively ideas. There had been a promoter, too, who would have made Anthony rich within a month if all his available money had not been safe in the little bag under Mother's pillow. Every one on board, it seemed to Anthony, had talked—and he had drunk in their words and paced the deck, the wind blowing his coat about his thin legs and taking him off his feet if he turned a sudden corner. . . . Between the new ideas that surged within, and the winds that buffeted, it seemed to him at times that his feet were not on the deck of a great steady-rolling boat, but moving in cloud-lit ways. He bet on the boat's run and took a childlike pleasure in the bits of silver lying in his palm. It did not occur to him that Mother would disapprove; but, by the help of his good angel, he did not mention them to her. So Mother, jolting sleepily beside him, had one less care for her troubled soul. The little pieces of silver would have shown her Anthony's slender feet set in the downward way.

But now, in the rumbling train, her hand clasped a tower of strength. At home, Anthony was only a reed, blown by the wind of thought. He made and mended shoes; but one did not trust him with serious affairs—buying the winter's coal and selecting shirts. . . . Here, in this desert of strangeness, and speeding toward a greater strangeness, he was—somehow inexplicably—another Anthony. . . . But, when all was said and done, he was only Anthony.

The train came to a pause and he put his head out of the window and looked up and down the platform—doors were being thrown open—porters crowded in. He gathered up his hand-bag and stepped out, Mother holding him fast.

Then, suddenly, she dropped the hand she held, and darted forward—and threw herself upon a big man and clasped him close. The big man bent a little, and smiled, and reached out a free hand to Anthony—

“It's Wally, Father!” sobbed Mother valiantly. “It's Wally Tilton!—I knew there'd be somebody here—to take care of us!”

IX

WALLACE TILTON AND APPLES

It did not seem a minute before Wallace Tilton had gathered them up and placed them in a taxicab; the porter trundled up with trunks and bags, thumping them on the roof and stowing them in front, and they were off through the whirring, turning London streets.

Mother glanced from the window, but it was only a blur—sprinkling lights—half-seen shops—flying signs—and close beside them a friendly honk—honk-honk—honk-honk-honk! . . . She looked across to Wallace Tilton, sitting opposite, and smiled—a round, happy, competent smile.

“You come and sit here, Wally.” She patted the ample seat beside her. “There’s plenty of room between us—yes. It’s more comfortable to sit close.”

And Wally moved over between the two

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with a sudden pleased sense of being a boy. He had not known Mrs. Wickham very well in Bolton. She had been only John Wickham's mother to him when they played ball together and went in swimming. As he had paced up and down the platform, waiting for the boat-train, he had tried to recall how she looked; but he had had only a confused sense of something round and lively—and a sudden taste of apples in his mouth. When he saw her descend from the carriage, clinging to Anthony's hand, her face had flashed him back through thousands of miles—two cookies and an apple for each of them—always—how could he have forgotten her! And while his respectable leather feet carried him to the cab and back and looked after luggage and fees, his real feet were twinkling down the streets of Bolton—grass and pebbles tickling the bare soles—and he shouted, nibbling cookies and apples, as he went. . . .

“Did you have a comfortable voyage?” he asked, looking down in the swift-moving darkness on Mother's bonnet.

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"Very nice," said Mother promptly. "You tell him where we're going to, Anthony. . . . He's got it on a piece of paper—John wrote it out for him——"

"I guess Wally knows where we're going to stay, Mother."

"How should he know, Father? We didn't know, ourselves—till just before we started, did we?"

"No——" said Anthony. He did not like to mention cablegrams. He knew how serenely Mother's face was beaming beyond Wally's big shoulder; and his fingers searched obediently for the slip of paper.

"It's pretty lucky Wally happened to be going by just as our train got in," said Mother slowly. "It's more than lucky——" she added thoughtfully. "It's one of those things you can't explain."

And neither Anthony nor Wallace tried to.

"That's the place," said Anthony. He handed over the slip of paper.

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"All right," responded Wallace, and tucked it into his pocket.

It was the unexpected beginning of an understanding between them. Wallace Tilton was not stupid; he himself would have admitted that he had cut his eye-teeth; and while Anthony had not cut his teeth, he had lived with Mother thirty years. Her serene little faiths shining upon the ways of Providence, were not things to be tampered with.

They turned out of the roar of Haymarket into a side street and a sudden hush—a sense of slipping forward on silence. Wallace glanced at the dark shops on either side—"We're nearly there," he said.

Mother straightened her bonnet furtively in the darkness and clasped her bag tight.

The "taxi" came to rest before a great door, and Mother peered out. A single gas-jet above the entrance lighted up the front of the house, a staid, old-fashioned house, blocking the end of the still little street. From the distance came

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soft-purring sounds and faded honks—honk-honk-honks—passing dreamily over the roofs. “It looks like a nice place,” said Mother.

“It is a nice place,” said Wallace, stepping from the cab. “At least they say so.”

The door had swung open before them and a little old woman, with softly-crimped white hair under its muslin cap and meek-folded hands, stood in the arched doorway looking out at them with keen, quiet eyes. Mother stepped quickly out, and the figure in the door moved a little back with an air of quaint stiffness that was like a curtsy.

“We have been expecting you,” she said; “your son cabled you would be here to-night.” She took down a bunch of keys from a nail in the hall.

Mother turned back to the door—“She’s heard from John, Anthony—to-day! Come right in. How did you know it was us?”

Her landlady smiled a little. “We were expecting Americans,” she said discreetly.

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"And you knew I was American—the first thing?"

"Yes." She smiled again and led the way into an office. "Show these guests to Number Ten." She handed the bunch of keys to a smart young woman who came forward. "We can make you comfortable in Number Ten to-night, and to-morrow I shall give you a better room. I hope you will find everything you need." She dismissed them with her little dip that was half benediction, half curtsy, and Mother followed the jingling bunch of keys to Number Ten.

"It's much nicer than New York!" she said.

The door had closed behind the smart young woman and Mother had taken off her bonnet and deposited it in a bureau drawer—a whole bureau drawer to itself—with almost a wicked sense of roominess.

Wallace Tilton smiled a little. He glanced about the small, stuffy apartment. "You like it better than New York, do you?"

"It's more like home," said Mother.

"Yes—it's homelike and quaint. I suppose it's about the last place of its kind in London. It was just like John to think of it for you; you'll be comfortable here."

"We shall like it real well," said Mother; and the familiar, half-forgotten phrase carried the big man of business back again to the boy.

He held out his hand. "Good-night; you have my address, you'll be sure to let me know if there's anything I can do——?"

Mother took the hand—tight, as if she heard all London roaring out there to devour her. "You'll come and see us every day, won't you, Wally? I don't know how we should have got along without you!" She held his hand, still—looking up at him a little wistfully.

Wallace Tilton's mother was dead. He did not think of her often—but he had a sudden, swift sense that he had missed something, as he looked down at the wrinkled face. "I'll come as often as you want me to," he said. "Glad to come!"

Then he had gone. And Mother had patted

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the pillows and looked in the empty wardrobe and unpacked three bags with a still, sunny face.

"I don't see as Wally's changed a mite," she said. "He looks to me just about the same as he did when he was little."

And Wallace, strolling along by the big stone lions, stopped to light a cigarette, and smiled as the smoke curled softly about his face. He threw away the match with a quick puff. . . . It would probably be a great bore—but there was something about them . . . He strolled on—with a little fresh, quick laughter stirring somewhere in his heart.

X

A CITY BY NIGHT

MOTHER, on her comfortable pillow, dreamed of Bolton and the canary. Only the faintest whispers of the wicked city reached her. Up and down the Strand, the river of faces flowed—vacuous, moving lips, dull-heavy feet—chatter and blank, and half-souled eyes looking out.

Anthony Wickham felt the sluggish tide, and turned on his pillow. Up against the sky, a great electric glow crept rosily and spread itself; and he lay looking at it, listening to the muffled city—the ceaseless honk of horns, waiting, calling, calling.

He rose softly and tiptoed across the room and dressed himself and slipped out, with quick, soft-clicking turn of the latch. Down in the clang and rush, his feet guiding him as if they remembered, the Strand drew him, sucked him

in and bore him on—the heavy-running Strand, with its weight of life, moving forever out of the past, riot and colour and laugh shrunk to a dead-brown stream. . . . Overhead the lights blinked and twinkled and stared, with cold, steady glare—white lights, shining on a past.

But Anthony Wickham, pressing close among the crowd, drifting with it, stopping at shop windows, staring at theatre-bills, drifting on, felt only the pulse of life, the great, new surging life behind the eyes and the faces—struggling out. He pressed close. People enough at last! His gentle, smiling eyes rested on them. No one looked at him—or cared. But somehow Anthony Wickham gathered them up—all of them—into his hungry heart and talked with them—all these friends. . . . Bolton was safe—with Mother and the canary in its cage. The great 'buses clanged and swayed, and he looked at the tops—at the jolting, soaring heads and hats—and laughed softly . . . and the feet on the pavement rose and fell, rose and fell— He had a sudden dim sense of

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Samuel at his bench, tapping forever—and the fat face changed to a thousand eyes—a woman's feather floated out—a blue, long feather, like a cloud—the hats and shoulders bobbed, and rose and fell—rose and fell to the beating pulse.

Some one jostled him, and he looked down; a bleared old hand had thrust a box of matches in his face, and Anthony felt in his pockets. Surely, he had some change, some silver and those great copper wheels—he remembered how heavy they were; his fingers came out empty, and he shook his head. . . . The beggar's dull-fixed eyes rested on him . . . and roved away, and came back, and the matches thrust themselves—with a whine. Anthony shook his head and put his hands in his pockets, turning them slowly inside out. . . . The beggar's grin drifted on, dirty, toothless—shuffle-shuffle, lock-and-shuffle. . . . Anthony's eyes followed the shuffle, the bent back and dipping coat—and the crowd came between. In a doorway, an old woman, dozing above her crumpled flowers, looked up—and jerked them forth, "Pen'-

a-bunch, pen'-a-bunch——” she mumbled, and dropped back into muzzy, trembling nods. Anthony's eyes rested on her—she jerked herself and held them forth, “Pen'-a-bunch—pen'-a-a——” she warbled, and collapsed. Anthony hesitated a moment, and stepped over to her, lifting her head a little till it rested against the side of the door. “Pen'-a-bun'——” she ground out.

A man and woman passing gave a little glance of amusement. “Drunk as a fool!” murmured the man. “Disgusting!” said the woman, with a half-glance of pity.

A big blue uniform appeared in the crowd and moved with solid foot—straight ahead. Under the high, inflexible helmet, a pair of keen eyes looked out and a little smile fixed itself on space. Law and order passed by—the crowd closed in, and jostled elbows and felt the shelter of the blue arm reach above them. Over the way, a church—dark-based, with delicate, springing tower—lifted itself in the midst of the Strand. Anthony looked up to it and crossed over. The roar of 'buses pounded about him

and filled him with din. Up and down the Strand the traffic swirled; and around the church, taxis shuttled and thrust with swift, burring hum, hoofs patted the pavement, clicking by. And in the midst of the roll and roar, the little church rose softly—bank of heaven—post-office to the eternal—soul-shop, Dwelling of the Most High . . . Toot-toot! Toot-toot-clang! Clang-toot-toot-toot-*toot!*

Anthony walked around the church and turned into a little, silent street, where the roaring of the Strand behind seemed suddenly lightened and free. He looked back to it, at the traffic rushing swiftly across the end; then he turned and descended the little street till the rumble had dwindled to a whisper behind. Before him rows of lights glanced out, rows of lights to right and left, and in the distance before him great shows of coloured moving bulbs making pictures on the dark. Anthony stared at them and moved on and crossed the wide street in front of him and came to the parapet. He leaned on it, looking

down—slow sluggish Thames, flowing with the Strand.

He stood a long time, looking down at the Thames. He did not know that he was looking on the source of England's greatness, flowing always to the sea, the anchorage that tempted rovers in, and built a city there, greatest of cities, and mingled tongues and races. . . . Slow-moving, sluggish English Thames. . . . In the distance, rows of bridges spanned it with light-flung arch; and beneath them moved the muddy, ceaseless tide. Something of its sinister meaning crept up to Anthony and he turned away slowly. . . . A great archway spanned the road and something lying at the side of it within the span caught his eye; he bent forward and peered at it—and looked again . . . a man, close against the arch, fallen—perhaps too weak to move. Anthony bent to him. Then his eye fell on another form beyond—and another—and he saw them stretching into the dimness of the arch—asleep on the stones. He straight-

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ened himself and stepped out of the arch and looked up at the sky—somewhere above. “I mustn’t let Mother know about it. Mother couldn’t sleep if she knew about that!”

XI

MOTHER AND LONDON

MOTHER rose with the lark—the London lark. She went softly about the room—not to wake Anthony, who was still sleeping. He had not slept as late as this since they left Bolton. On the steamer he had been up, every morning before the sun, watching it from the boat's rail and coming down to tell her of its glories. It would be a long time before Mother could listen to a sunrise without a little qualm.

She did up her hair in its tight, competent knob and finished dressing and polished her spectacles; she did not put them on; she only needed them for fine work, for reading and sewing and brushing Anthony's clothes.

There was a knock at the door and she looked doubtfully across the room. Then she tiptoed to the door and opened it. A young man, with neatly-pointed moustache and lifted eyebrows,

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bowed himself to her. Mother nodded back, holding the door safe.

“Will Madam breakfast here, or in the breakfast-room?”

Madam glanced helplessly at Anthony, and back at the impassive moustache; she took her American courage in her hands—“We don’t want it yet—*he’s* asleep,” she whispered.

“As you say, Madam.” He held out a card to her—“Madam can order when she likes.”

Mother closed the door on the stately, retreating steps and sat down, trembling a little. She had had her first encounter with a foreigner—and she was alive! She looked down at the menu, and reached for her glasses.

When Anthony woke, she was still absorbed in the permutations and combinations of an English breakfast. Half an hour later when, with Anthony’s help, she had selected ham and eggs, potatoes and coffee and rolls—from scheme marked “table d’hôte,” and costing something that Mother figured into thirty-six cents, she sighed a little.

"It's dreadful high for a breakfast! But we must have *something*—to eat——"

Anthony comforted her. "John told you not to think too much about what things cost," he reminded her. "He'd want us to have good breakfasts, you know—as good as we'd have at home."

"I don't suppose he'd want us to go hungry," assented Mother.

And when they were seated in the high, old-fashioned room, close to a latticed window looking upon a little court, the savoury breakfast spread before them, even Mother's soul relaxed.

"I declare, it *is* a nice place, Anthony! I don't know but I shall like England—" She mused it slowly, chewing rosy bits of ham.

Anthony's glance moved to her as he stirred his coffee. "It's like most countries, I guess, Mother, good and bad, rich and poor—" he stopped suddenly. He had not meant to mention poor.

But Mother chatted comfortably on and ate her breakfast as if the great beast out there were

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not waiting to devour her—and every one—in its fierce fangs.

As the day went on, it became evident that the beast would have very little chance to feast on Mother. After breakfast she announced that she had sewing to do, and she got out her work-basket and scissors and seated herself by the window—as serene as if the canary were singing overhead and the geraniums blossoming in the sun. There was no sun in her London window; it opened into a court of skylights and high chimneys, with walls rising about it; but it was very quiet and Mother, sitting by it, cut and stitched and snipped in safety. To all Anthony's overtures she turned a deaf ear.

"I want to get a new collar on your coat before dark, Anthony. I ought to 'a' done it before we left home. It isn't hardly fit to be seen—" she held it up.

"But that's my winter coat, Mother! I shan't need a winter coat—for months——"

"You can't tell what you may need in

London," said Mother. "It's different!" She spoke sternly, out of a mouthful of pins, and went on stitching and turning, her face absorbed in its work.

"You run along out and see things," she added after a little. "You can tell me about it when you come in."

So Anthony had wandered forth into the great town; he had mounted 'buses and journeyed through stale suburbs and back; he had wandered in the parks, and watched the children play. And Mother, anchored safe to her coat, had listened to his tales of adventure with her round, wrinkled smile and beamed on him.

"I'm glad you've seen everything," she said. "You'll feel more at home now you've seen everything."

Anthony shook his head with the slow, gentle smile he had. "There is considerable to see in London," he said.

Mother looked at him over her glasses. "Didn't you go all over town?" she asked.

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Anthony smiled a little. "Not quite, Mother; there are a few things left to see—side streets left, I reckon."

Mother returned to her work. After a little she spoke again. "Wallace'll take us," she said.

And at four o'clock Wallace appeared in morning-suit and faultless tie. He had told himself that he would run in for tea—just to see that they were getting on all right. Probably they would be out—so much the better—

But Mother, sitting by her window with her sewing scattered comfortably about her, could hardly be described as "out." She had gone to the dining-room for a hasty luncheon, and returned with renewed zeal.

"I haven't had such a good time to sew, in years," she said, slipping on her thimble and plunging into work.

When Wallace appeared at four o'clock, she looked up triumphant. "Just finished!" she said. "Look's good as new, doesn't it!" She held it up before him.

Wallace inspected it with laughing eye—

"You ought to have been a tailor," he declared.

"I took plenty of time to it," said Mother modestly. "I wasn't hurried. I turned the lining all through, you see." She hung it carefully on its hook and came back to the window.

"By the way," said Wallace, "how would you like to go out to tea with me?" He asked it casually; it had occurred to him that tea might not be forthcoming; and Wallace was devoted to his tea, as devoted as any Englishman—and more.

Mother glanced quickly up at the bit of sky over her court. "Is it as late as that!" she exclaimed. "I'd no idea it was supper time."

He smiled at the good old word. "Well, not quite supper time, perhaps, but we might get a cup of tea somewhere."

"I'll be ready in a minute," said Mother, and tied her bonnet-strings under her round chin; and they set forth into London.

"Father's told me a good deal about it," she said, trotting contentedly on. "He's been out most all day, seeing things—My, what a racket!"

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She put her hands over her ears and looked up at him appealingly.

They had turned suddenly out of the side street into the din of Piccadilly—into the very heart of the Circus—and she shouted the last words helplessly up at him.

He bent to her, smiling, and tucked her hand in his arm. "You'll be all right!" he said. "Just shut your eyes and go along." And Mother suddenly felt herself lifted, almost bodily, from her feet on Wallace's strong arm, and half borne through the crowd, her feet barely touching the stones—taxis, horses, 'buses, men and women surged about her—thrusting on—a horse's head loomed above her and gave way to a great, shooting 'bus that turned suddenly into a small boy, pushing his cart before him, and became a fat man running down the swift-moving taxi that dwindled sharply to a little round woman in a bonnet, sobbing almost hysterically on the sidewalk. . . . "I never saw anything like it—Wallace!" she gasped.

He patted the hand on his arm and steadied

her through the crowd. "There, there—Mother!" The word slipped out unawares, and she looked up, smiling quaveringly at him.

"I knew you wouldn't let anything happen to me," she said. "But a crowd always confuses me a little—some way."

"Game little woman!" said Wallace under his breath. . . . He need not have said it under his breath; he might have shouted it aloud—very loud indeed. Mother would not have heard. Her ears were filled with siren calls and with the swift-moving, clanging din of Piccadilly.

XII

IN A TEA-ROOM

THE tea-room was spacious—flowers and palms, music playing, soft chatter and talk; spoons clicked, little silver tea-pots clinked on their trays; and through it all, behind the palms, the music played softly.

Under a great, shading palm, Mother looked about her with pleased eyes. "It's a nice place when you get to it," she said.

Wallace nodded. "One of the best." They had finished their tea, and he sat with a cigarette in his fingers, rolling it slowly. "You don't mind if I smoke?"

"Not a mite. John smokes—when he's home. I didn't like it—but it's good for the plants. They always do better when John's home." She beamed on him.

He smiled a little and bent over for a match, and her eyes fell on the cigarette—"Mercy! Is *that* what you're going to smoke!"

He drew in a breath from the lighted match, turning his eyes to her with a smile as he let it out in the little puffs of billowy smoke——

She watched them fade. "Makes me think of grapevine," she said. "John used to smoke that."

He nodded. "We both did."

"I know. You was always up to the same things! Seems queer now, with all these contraptions around—to think of your going bare-foot——"

Wallace laughed, a little touch of constraint in his face. A group had come into the balcony at the right and were looking down at him. One of the women raised her eyebrows with a quick look at his companion and nodded gaily. Wallace returned the salute—turning his shoulder, ever so slightly. A merry laugh drifted down and the party settled into their places; waiters moved among them and gay chatter of talk and laughter came over the railing. There was a freedom about the group, a little half-conscious

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ignoring of the audience, that made people turn to look at them.

"Friends of yours?" asked Mother. She was beaming up at them with round, open gaze.

"Not exactly—friends," said Wallace, "—people I know."

He turned his shoulder squarely on them and devoted himself to Mother. He was a happy host when he chose to be, as several women in the group above could testify, and Mother expanded under his attentions, like a child. She confided to him her trials since this wild project entered John's head—all her difficulty in getting ready for it—her fears and her present anxiety and ignorance in the great, unknown town. . . . "I feel as if I didn't know anything!" she said. "I can't even understand what they say—half the time. There was some folks at breakfast this morning—they were talking same as we are now—and not much farther off than you are, and I couldn't understand what they said! I knew it was English. I could get a good English word, now and then, but it

wasn't like anything I ever heard—they kind of run up and down so—singing-like, and not exactly singing either. . . . I don't see what I am going to do if I can't understand the language!" She looked at him, pathetically, and Wallace smiled.

"You see how quick you'll get used to it," he said encouragingly. "I almost never think of it now."

She leaned toward him a little—"That's the worst of it, Wally—I don't *want* to get used to it—and we've got to stay a year!"

Wallace laughed out. "You'll like it before you've been here a month—you see if you don't."

But Mother only breathed a virtuous sigh—"I hope I shan't—Wallace. . . . Anthony likes it. He always does like things different. He's just that way when he's home—won't keep his collars in the same corner of the bureau drawer, two weeks running. I have to keep putting 'em back for him!" She sighed again. "And everything costs so! How much do you suppose we paid for our breakfast, Wally?"

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He blew a little wave of smoke. "Oh—two-and-six, perhaps—I don't know what they do charge there."

"Would you mind speaking slower, Wallace—just a little mite slower? *You* kind o' run up and down too. You didn't say twenty-six?"

"No—two-and-six."

"That makes eight!" said Mother. "I told you everything was different!"

So, in the great palm room, to the sound of music, with waiters moving on noiseless feet and little cups clinking about her, Mother learned the system of English coinage.

With the card on the table before them, Wallace gave her a first lesson, pointing to shillings and pence with the half-smoked end of his cigarette, and drawing on the cigarette with amused breath while Mother's mind grasped the items and dealt with them.

"You're going to pay four shillings and six-pence for what we've had here?" She made a swift computation—"It's one dollar, twelve and a half cents," she said.

"And the fee——" said Wallace, wickedly, out of his little cloud of smoke.

Mother turned a speechless, shattered face on him. . . . "Does it seem all right to you, Wally? I feel as if I was out of my head—or something!"

"You're all right—Mother——"

"I like to hear you call me that," she said.

He nodded. "Yes, I'm going to call you 'Mother.'"

She looked at him with swift thought—"We must 'a' paid more than thirty-six cents for our breakfast." Her eyes were on the shillings and pence. "It must 'a' been 'three-and-six' apiece, and that's—one dollar and seventy-five cents!"

Half an hour later, in the quiet of their own room, Mother had revealed to Anthony the abyss on which they stood. "It's likely to cost us seventy-five dollars a week to stay here," she said.

Anthony looked about him at the peaceful little room. "It doesn't look so dreadful expen-

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sive, does it, Mother? I went into a place to-day, down the road a piece, where they had flowers and pictures and lace curtains—I should have known *that* would cost, but——”

“Wallace says it’s these quiet places that charge the highest sometimes,” said Mother. “They charge for being old, I guess. He says there are folks that always *have* come here and always will; they’ll keep on coming—no matter *what* they charge! And so they charge—I can’t understand it!” she said helplessly.

“I suppose it’s like folks bringing their shoes to me instead of taking them to Gibson——?”

“Gibson!” Mother said the word with the finest touch of scorn. “Gibson!”

“He’s cheaper——” said Anthony.

“I wouldn’t let Gibson do a pair of shoes for me—not if I was starving!” said Mother. “Wallace is going to look up a place for us. I told him we couldn’t stay here!”

“John wanted us to come here,” said Anthony. He had a picture of Mother sitting by her window with her sewing peacefully spread

about her—and, beside it, the pretentious hotels that he had seen to-day, on the crowded streets. He could not fancy Mother with her sewing in one of those places. "Don't you think we'd better——"

"Wallace is going to get us a place to-morrow," said Mother firmly, "a place to keep house in."

XIII

WALLACE GOES HOUSE-HUNTING

UNDER the appealing look in Mother's eyes, Wallace had promised. But the more he reflected, the more difficult the thing grew to look. There were plenty of little flats. Wallace had occupied little flats himself. He smiled to think of Mother's round goodness in some of them—and they were expensive. His mind left Mayfair and ranged through Whitechapel and model tenements, and dwelt on Garden Cities—with a shivering excursion to Brixton and Camden Town and Wormwood Scrubbs—and came back to Mayfair and the parks. He thought of a little house in Highgate; but he had a sudden sense that Highgate was very far away—he could not run in every day, as he had promised Mother he would do, till she grew used to things. . . . London did not seem adapted to small, round

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women in bonnets—who made you think of apples and cookies and who gave you the quick, light-hearted feeling of going barefooted in a palm room! . . . His mind travelled up and down the Strand and veered to the Embankment—and came to a sudden halt. He was looking up at the Temple buildings lifting themselves, grey and grim, to Fleet Street—The Vintons had lived there—Where were the Vintons?

Wallace could not remember where the Vintons were, but he remembered very clearly going to see them in the Inner Temple—the queer, stuffed-in little place; and in a flash, he saw Mother happily installed and Wallace Tilton running in to see her every day—till she got used to things!

Wallace Tilton had been house-hunting before—but not in the Temple. His usual method was to stroll into an office in the afternoon, select a set of rooms that he thought would suit him, look it over casually the next day and accept the key. His instinct told him that his usual

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method might not work in the Temple. The Temple was a world by itself.

He began with the porter at the gate—a personage in silk hat, brass buttons and trimmings, who had no knowledge of furnished rooms to be sublet; but after looking thoughtfully at a piece of silver lying in his hand, he remembered that sometimes gentlemen going away did sublet, furnished—yes. . . . The treasurer had charge of letting chambers. Quite so—good-day, sir. . . . Wallace mounted the hill of Middle Temple Lane, elated, and passed through Pump Court, where a multitude of sparrows twittered shrilly in the trees—as if innumerable little glass balls hung among the branches and swayed and tinkled in a wind; he crossed the low-vaulted Cloisters beyond, and another Court, and went down a dark flight of steps and laid his request before the treasurer—who looked at him, and smiled, a little superior English smile.

“It is against the rules for any tenant of the Temple to sublet—any person doing it forfeits his lease.” He said it crisply and neatly and

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looked at Wallace with his bland smile—the smile that could not understand how any one could be so ignorant of a primary law of nature.

Wallace stared back. “But I have friends who——”

The treasurer still smiled. “I have never known of its being done,” he said politely.

Wallace looked at him again——“Thank you,” he said slowly. “I have come to the wrong place—I see?”

“The last place in the world,” assented the treasurer—almost cordially.

“Do you suppose there is any one who has ever—er—heard of its being done?”

The treasurer examined his nails, and looked carelessly at Wallace’s coat. “The Wig-maker may have—heard of something of the kind—he is centrally located—yes—just beyond the Cloisters—It is quite against the rules, you understand?”

“Quite so,” said Wallace. “Thank you——” and he sought the Wig-maker, blessing and curs-

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ing, for the thousandth time, the nation that sees only what it is compelled to see.

The Wig-maker seated on a high-stool before his effigy, turning it with skilful, lady-like fingers, looked up. His heavy brown moustache was oiled, his hair shone with gloss, and his expression had a kind of childlike patience—something just short of shining. He admitted, wearily, that he knew of chambers, and took down a handful of keys. Wallace followed him—up innumerable flights of stone steps and wooden steps; he began to understand the look of weariness in the Wig-maker's face.

Interest in the chambers, the Wig-maker had not. He threw open the door of each set, with the same look of infantile patience. Take it, or leave it—but don't expect him to be concerned in it. In the intervals his mind was probably engaged in flights of wig-making.

To Wallace, peering into cupboards and looking under sinks, with a haunting memory of Mother's kitchen, there was something oppressive in the Wig-maker's aloofness.

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"This seems like a good set," he remarked cheerfully.

"Some people like it," responded the Wig-maker; and Wallace saw the place in its true light—the walls were dirty, and the rugs frayed—dust everywhere—"I don't think it will do," he said slowly. "Have you anything more?"

"One more," said the Wig-maker, and they toiled up four flights to a set under the eaves. "Sea-captain," said the Wig-maker, stepping back.

Wallace looked about him; the rooms were tiny, but spotless. Out across the roofs was a group of chimney-pots, and beyond a glimpse of masts and moving water. "How much are these?" he asked.

"Fifteen shillings," said the Wig-maker. He was looking into immeasurable distance.

"Cheaper than some of them," commented Wallace.

"He wants to go," said the Wig-maker. "He gave up the sailing to practice law; but he doesn't like law—he's going on a voyage. To-morrow

noon, he sails. They'll be ready to let at one o'clock." It was a long speech for the Wig-maker—almost committal.

Wallace looked through them again. "I want to bring some one this afternoon to see them," he said. "Can you show them this afternoon?"

"Any time between four and five," said the Wig-maker. "She told me they will be out then."

"She——?"

"His daughter—the Captain's daughter."

"Ah—that has a pleasant sound—the Captain's daughter—I think we shall take them——"

The Wig-maker looked at him without comment.

"Can you give me the address of—the Captain's daughter?"

"They let the rooms through me," explained the Wig-maker.

"I know—I understand it—quite. But I should like to see her—the daughter of the Cap-

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tain." He took out a note-book, and held his pencil ready.

"She lives in Chelsea," sighed the Wig-maker—and Wallace's pencil took down the street and number, and he shut the book and slipped it into his pocket.

"Thank you," he said. "We shall see the Captain's daughter—at once."

XIV

IN THE TEMPLE

"In the Temple?" said Mother, wrinkling her forehead a little. "Is it a church, Wallace?"

"Not a church exactly—" said Wallace. "There's a church near by," he added. He was not quite clear in his mind whether Mother wanted to live in a church—it seemed safer to keep on neutral ground. "It's an old church, you know—thirteenth century!"

"Is it where you go?"

"Where I——?"

"The church where you go to?" said Mother.

"Oh! I—I shall probably go there, if you take the rooms."

"That'll be nice!—with me and Father."

"Yes—that's what I thought."

"He's found a place for us, Father!" She turned to Anthony who had come in and was

smiling down at them. "He's going to take us to see it, and we can move right in—if we want to—to-morrow. It's a kind of church—" She beamed on them both.

Anthony looked across at Wallace.

"It's in the Temple," explained Wallace—"Plowden Buildings, you know. It's rather high up—four flights; but 'Mother' says she doesn't mind that."

"It costs three dollars and seventy-five cents a week," said Mother, "and it's furnished with everything we need—mostly."

"It's quite furnished, I should say," said Wallace. "Put on your bonnet and come along and see it."

He had entered into the spirit of things. . . . Ten days ago if one of the chorus ladies had told him that he would presently be escorting a round old lady about London, looking up rooms, interviewing Wig-makers and Captain's daughters and looking into coal cellars, he would have laughed with her and taken the bet. . . . But he had not so much fun in

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years. Business was stale—any one could play it with his eyes blindfold. Chorus girls had their limits. . . . But a lively old lady, to tuck under your arm and pilot about London made life worth living. . . . He guided her across the worst places, for the sheer joy of feeling the fierce little clutch on his arm and the gasp of thanksgiving at the end.

“I don’t see what I should do without you, Wally! Seems as if there was more people, every time I go out.”

“You’ll get used to it,” said Wallace.

But, privately, in his heart, he hoped she would never get used to it. She recalled to him so vividly his own first days in London—He had not presented to London the same bewildered; dishevelled front of courage that Mother wore; but inside, he knew, he had experienced most of the feelings that she displayed so recklessly. . . . It all took him back to the first day. He was hardly more than a boy . . . but he had done the work of a man, of two men—ten men—they had got their money’s

worth out of him—and they had never paid him a cent more than they had to—well, he was taking it easy now—a week in the country when he chose—his own car—plenty of friends. . . . There were not many men who would not be glad to be in Wallace Tilton's shoes to-day. It would have surprised Wallace very much if he could have known that he stood in immediate danger of losing those comfortable, well-brushed shoes—that, almost any day, he might find himself tasting the joys of barefoot life in figurative earnest.

"I don't feel as if we ought to take so much of your time, Wally," said Mother. She was swimming valiantly up the Strand, her head just above water.

"My time doesn't matter," laughed Wallace—"plenty more where it came from. Here we are!" He had turned into the low-arched gateway, and Mother, with a little gasp of relief, righted herself and felt cautiously of her bonnet. . . .

Wallace nodded to Anthony. "You and

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Mother come on slowly. I'll run ahead for the key."

They watched him disappear down a long passage, through a narrow door at the end—out of sight; they walked slowly on, looking ahead to the centre of a court where a fountain splashed in the sun and a dove on the edge of the basin preened itself and shimmered; sparrows dropped down to drink, ferns formed a green edge along the water and tree-shadows flecked the stone pavement. It was like a picture in an old book. . . . Across the court rose a strange, worn building with stained-glass windows and quaint carving, and beyond it a flight of steps descended to a little court-yard where great halls, with pinnacles and towers, lifted themselves; and through rows of iron railings and across the wide expanse of grass, glimpses of tram-cars and taxi-cabs flitted past. . . . But no sound came to the little fountain court—the dove cooed and lifted its wing flying a little away; it waddled business-like and brisk, on the paved court, pecking at nothing.

Mother eyed it, happily. "It does seem good to see a bird—doesn't it?"

"There he is!" said Anthony.

Wallace was jingling keys at them from an archway and they moved across. "It's down here," he said. He descended a flight of steps and Mother looked back, a little wistfully, to the fountain. "I hoped it might be along here somewhere," she said softly.

"It's right near by," said Wallace. "You can come any time—and hear the birds sing!"

Mother smiled back and followed him down the narrow edge of pavement to the entrance of the high, dark building. "Seventy-three steps," he said. "I counted them—Hold your breath!"

But Mother mounted on the wings of hope. To have a little place of her own—a real home in the great city's roaring—it seemed very near—only seventy-three steps!

Wallace inserted the key. "It's small, you know—" He swung back the door—and disclosed behind it another door.

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Mother looked at it blankly. "We must have got the wrong key, Wallace," she said helplessly.

"It's all right," said Wallace. He held up another key, and put it in the lock. "They always have two doors in the Temple." He threw open the inner door and drew back.

Mother stepped over the threshold. "It doesn't seem much like a Temple, does it? It's just a little home!" She was standing motionless in the passage-way, looking into a room beyond; through the west windows the sun poured in, and in one of them was—something. Mother peered forward—"It's a bird-cage, Anthony!" she said swiftly. "Wallace, it's a bird!" In another minute, she had crossed the room and was looking up at the tiny, yellow ball, with adoring eyes—chirping, laughing—the tears brimming somewhere in the round eyes. "Will they let me have it, Wallace—a bird—!" she asked.

"It's yours, Mother—bought and paid for to-day," said Wallace, smiling.

A glance passed between him and Anthony,

and they stood waiting. Mother had crossed the room, straight to the bird. She had not glanced at the grate with the little fire burning in it and, in front of it, the tiny tea-table with white cloth and cups for three, and the tea-kettle humming on the hob. She turned slowly about and saw it—and caught her breath. “Doesn’t—it—look like—home—Father—!” The next minute she was sobbing a little, and wiping her eyes, and taking off her bonnet—“You mean it’s for *us*—now—to sit right down to!— Mercy no, I can’t eat in my bonnet, Wallace!” She bustled to the fire. She poked it, and looked in the tea-kettle and laughed; she measured the tea, with a hand that trembled—“Seems as if I was reading it in a book!” she said softly. “I didn’t know anything could happen like this—in London!”

“Just the place where it’s bound to happen,” said Wallace. “I take cream with mine—cream and plenty of sugar—Thank you.” He took the cup and sipped it slowly. “The Captain’s daughter is a fine judge of tea,” he said.

And while Mother drank her tea, and nibbled a little at cakes, he gave them the history of his house-hunting, and made out for Mother addresses and directions, and drew a plan of streets and shops—the best places to buy tea and coals and butter and eggs—all carefully gathered from the Captain's daughter, and vouched for by practical, English common-sense.

"You can't go wrong," he said as he jotted them down. "She has tried them all; and she's the real thing—British made. You'll find it as easy as shopping in Bolton."

"The man comes to the door there," said Mother, "and I tell him what I want. But I shan't mind going out—I've got a good big net-bag to put things in."

Wallace knew the kind of bag. He had seen them in 'buses—held carefully together by small women whose toes did not touch the bounding floor—bulging in every direction and holding an incredible quantity of stuff. He had looked on them with amused tolerance; but now suddenly, he saw a picture of Wallace Tilton carrying a



Suddenly he stopped and looked down—it was quite a different pair



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very large, well-stuffed bag and escorting Mother through the busiest streets.

"They will deliver goods if you go early," he said.

"Oh, I shall go early," responded Mother. "But I shan't need anything for a day or two. There's quite a lot of things on hand, I see—in the cupboard there. . . . Well, I must wash the dishes, and we'll be getting back." She rose with a little sigh, and pinned a towel about her person.

They watched her as she whisked into the room and out, gathering up plates and cups and pouring hot water into a little pan that she brought from the kitchen beyond. "There's everything there," she said, "and most of them hung on nails. I never saw so many nails!"

"Ship-shape," said Anthony.

"That's it—I've said 'ship-shape' all my life and, I declare, I never thought what it meant! The whole place is just the same." She looked about her, at the small, shining room.

"You can play you're going on a voyage," said Wallace.

"I'd rather stay here," said Mother hastily. "I'd like to settle right down this minute—and not stir another step!"

"Why not do it, Mother?" said Anthony. "We'll get the things. Wallace says it's all ready for us here——"

Mother glanced at him doubtfully. "My best bonnet's in the third drawer," she said. "—I declare I hate to let you—but that street we came through does—roar—so!"

"We'll bring everything," said Wallace. "You stay where you are—and be comfortable."

Mother watched them go with half-doubtful eyes. "You look in all the bureau drawers, Anthony—and you've got to pay fees to some of 'em. The Book says 'from two to five shillings to the waiter—and others in proportion.' You'd better ask Wallace how much 'in proportion' is——"

"I'll see to that," said Wallace. "Don't you

worry, Mother. You just go right on making a home.”

So they went out and left her, and Mother crossed over to the bird and chirped to him a little and looked at the chairs and patted them—and suddenly two large tears rolled down her cheeks. She wiped them quickly away, and two more followed—and two more—and then a whole flood, bursting the bounds and shaking her all through. She sank into a chair by the fire, wiping them hastily away and looking through them at the shining room. . . . There was only the humming of the kettle on the hob—and Mother’s little sobs breaking in—and now and then a soft, quiet chirp from the yellow bird in his cage in the window.

XV

ANTHONY AND BEGGARS

ONCE Mother was settled in her nest, a new life began for Anthony. The great town drew him—asleep or awake, he felt it whispering subtly; and often while Mother was sleeping or while she was busy with her dishes and bread-raising, he stole out to meet it.

The policemen on the various beats grew to know the thin, gentle figure, slipping through the crowd—a figure that seemed to be always seeking something that it did not find.

Now and then Anthony stopped to speak to a begging match-vender or to some fiddler at the curb-stone. For the most part they looked at him with dull, uncomprehending eyes—there were those, perhaps, who might have understood him—searching—seeking—always seeking. But they might not speak to him, and he passed them, unheeding. The power of the city was on him;

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the same great force that sent Mother, palpitating to her tree-top, drew him out, drove him forth. He was not an American visiting London—he was a part of it—part of its hurry and life. Nowhere in the world, perhaps, could the shoemaker have come so close to himself as in the great town that drove its roots into the Past. For years he had sat, tapping away at the problems and the dreams that roamed the London streets. He was not afraid to look on at life, flooding through; he had no hasty impulse to cover it up out of sight with its wickedness and filth . . . there might be something—who could tell?—something that might be made as good as new. . . .

By a kind of instinct he seemed to penetrate the heavy masks as he penetrated the nights of fog along the streets.

“They look to me, Anthony, as if they were all going to some great funeral somewhere,” Mother pronounced when she had become a little accustomed to the streets and ventured forth in friendly daylight under Wallace’s wing. “I de-

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clare, I never saw so many folks that looked as if they was too miserable to live!"

"They're not so unhappy," said Anthony. "I seem to know how they feel, Mother—they've got a bad pair of shoes to do—and they don't know just how they'll do 'em . . . no soles hardly, and heels run down, and uppers pretty bad, and gaping—but they don't give up. That's what I like about 'em, Mother—they don't give up! I can feel it—how they're—doing—thinking—turning 'em in their mind—and when I look up and see 'em that way in a 'bus—all kind o' puzzled and heavy, daft-like—I say to myself, 'They're a-thinking—they'll get it yet!' . . . I've set that way myself a good many times with an old, worn-out pair in my hands, not know which way to turn hardly—and then all of a sudden I'd see! . . . You have to tackle your old shoes in an old country—and make 'em come right. . . . Over home we don't mend—we throw away and start new every time. But there's something about an old pair—a good hand-made pair, to start with—

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that you don't get with us. . . . Someway, on the streets, I feel as if I knew how they feel—they don't move very quick; but there's something down underneath you can count on—and I feel it tugging at me—Some days it's all I can do to keep from reaching out my hands to 'em and saying, 'Let *me* take a hold!' I feel as if they'd understand—and move along to make a place for me. There's something big about 'em, Mother——”

But Mother only sniffed a little. When Anthony got to running on, talking about people—talking foolishness about people, and mixing them up with shoes, that way, she took refuge in silence. But in her heart, she was a little troubled about Anthony. . . . He had nothing to take up his mind as she had. The scrubbing and scouring of the little chambers filled her with content, and the canary sang in the window.

But Anthony seemed unconscious of anything wrong. He went out each morning and returned at noon or night with long and interesting

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tales. It was only when he talked queerly about people that Mother had a little sudden fear that the change might be bad for Anthony. But when she looked at his quiet face she forgot her fears. The wrinkles seemed disappearing—only the one straight one remained between the eyes, rising to meet the lock of hair that rose straight from his forehead—it seemed to her it had grown white since they came to London—the little lock that was not quite a curl. . . .

Gradually the American with the little white lock of hair became known to others besides the police; professional beggars marked him, but the police marked the beggars, and they returned to their stare of match-boxes and shoestrings.

Anthony moved among them, his eyes sometimes lifted to their faces, but oftener on the dragging, shuffling feet. . . . It seemed to him that never since light fell on the earth had shoes so disreputable been seen—affairs of windy leather and string, the mere assumption of shoes; shoes that bulged and gave way, sloppy and torn

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and cut, shuffling and slinking—heels run down and toes turning up. . . . Everywhere such shoes—at the foot of heroic statues, standing straight and high, made of iron or bronze or marble—never to be touched. . . . Everywhere the hideous, sodden poverty—sitting at the foot of the heroic statues—toppled this way and that in wretched ulsters and shawls, the misery of London—not rebelling, not begging, not even resting—but merely sitting out existence, waiting for the end, hopeless that there would be any end—eyes bleared and gouged, ears torn, noses eaten level, feet swollen in the shapeless shoes—sodden with drink, sodden with, God knows what injustice and mismanagement. . . . Anthony took them all into his heart—that would have mended them—if it could.

Sometimes his hand exchanged a copper, sometimes he stopped for a bit of talk by one of the shapeless, shrugging masses at the foot of its statue; and, after a little, he began to know them—the hopeless, unworthy, god-forsaken

ones, and those who sometimes felt a breath of hope with the spring—but curiously, it was the hopeless bundles that touched him most—forsaken of God and men . . . the ones that leered dull eyes at him—under England's great men—evil, dirty, through and through. . . . Where was God keeping himself?

An old beggar moved a red eye on him. . . .
"I'm sixty, come next Michaelmas," he said.

"Just my age," said Anthony. He had seated himself on the edge of the statue and crossed his legs, swinging one slim foot a little slowly back and forth.

The beggar's eye grudged its easy swing . . . and gaped at it.

"It's hard, getting old," said Anthony; "things don't seem the same when you're old——"

Half-articulate words answered him—they mumbled themselves at Dewar's whisky, just faintly visible in the blur across the river Thames.

"Everything gets old together," said Anthony, "clothes—and shoes." His eye fell to

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the shapeless masses at the end of the legs, that thrust themselves out as feet.

The beggar shuffled them a little and whined beneath his breath—his eye on an officer pacing the walk on the other side of the embankment.

Anthony bent over and looked at the shoes attentively—they had no strings, and white rags were bound about things inside, for stockings. “They’re not so bad—” said Anthony, half to himself, “they might be mended. I think—if you would come—with me——”

He got up and the beggar got up with him, shuffling his feet, exaggerating their clumsiness, and hobbling carefully.

The officer across the way strolled over, with even, implacable tread. His careless hand swung out and touched the beggar’s shoulder—“None of your games, Jack!”

The red eye turned on him virtuously. “It’s *his* doin’s—he arxed me,” said the beggar. His eyes grew resentful. “I didn’t do nothink——”

The officer’s hand dropped from his shoulder—“See that you don’t do nothing—that’s all.”

His hand motioned to Anthony and they moved away a few steps.

"He's a thorough bad one," said the officer, "bad through and through."

"That's what I thought," said Anthony. "That's why I wanted to do something. . . . It's not against the law to do something, is it?" The question was respectful—but there was a little glint somewhere behind it that crossed to the policeman and laughed between them.

The policeman motioned toward the beggar—"You keep your eye on him, that's all. I'll take your name and address, please."

The beggar's lowering eye watched the writing and followed the broad figure as it swung away into its even tread—"You arxed me to go!" he grumbled. "I didn't do nothink."

"This is the way," said Anthony, and they turned in at the Temple Gate. The porter looked out of his box with censorious eye, and half-way up the Temple Lane, an officer accosted them—and let them go—with a warning look at the beggar's dull and glowering eye.

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But in spite of officers and warnings, the man seemed to walk a little more erect—his feet shuffled less on the stones. It was only when they had climbed to the top of the Plowden Buildings and his eye encountered Mother's, that he collapsed.

She looked at Anthony meaningly.

"I want my mending-kit, Mother," said Anthony.

Anthony had brought his mending-kit. She had found it packed in one of the boxes—awls and thread and wax and pegs, everything that could be needed for a pair of worn shoes—or even for the making of new ones. She had pushed it far back under the Captain's bed, and placed the box containing her best bonnet carefully in front of it. She had hoped—with that box in front of it—it was the end of it. . . . Once or twice she had thought of reminding him of it, suggesting that he make her a new pair of shoes; but she had three pair already, good ones—and Anthony did not seem very unhappy or restless; it was only when he talked queerly about

people that she had had the little sudden fear that the change might have been bad for him, and had thought of the box pushed far back under the bed. . . . She had imagined many things, but never had she imagined anything like the red-eyed thing in front of her.

She hesitated a minute. She glanced at him again, and brought a chair—a wooden one—and placed it in the middle of the passage-way; she disappeared into the bedroom.

When she re-appeared she bore the square wooden box. Anthony's eyes lighted as he reached out his hands for it. He opened it and fell to looking it over, humming a little to himself. . . .

The beggar watched him with cautious glance. His red, leery, indifferent eye followed the mending of his shoes.

Deep in his dark, sodden soul was imbedded the conviction that he should pay for mending his shoes—not in money, perhaps; there was not a copper in his torn, flapping pockets to give up—but pay of some sort he would have to give;

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his freedom or his likings would be impinged on. He sat waiting, a-tremble in his old nerves, watching Anthony's fingers round the disreputable shapes into shoes.

When they were done, and Anthony handed them to him with a little gesture and smile, he thrust his shapeless feet once more into them—and stood up, waiting—braced for the worst——

“Do they feel comfortable?” asked Anthony.

“They're all right——” half-surlily he moved toward the door.

Anthony's eyes were fixed on the shoes, smiling gently. The man's glance saw the look and stopped—the worn shoes paused——

“Thank ye for doin' 'em,” he mumbled.

“I liked to do it for you,” said Anthony, looking at him.

“I can't pay yer nothink——” It was half a whine.

Anthony's eyes rested on his face——“I did not mend them for pay,” he said.

The beggar braced himself——Now it was up to him. But there was only silence in the room.

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“Ye ain’t goin’ to pray with me—nor nothin’.”
It was full of disbelief—and a little bleary
hope——

Anthony shook his head. “I—don’t—hardly
—know—how to pray—myself,” he said gently.

“God bless yer—sor!” The beggar touched
a dirty forelock, and the mended shoes shuffled
out, across the hallway, down the long stairs,
clumpety-flap, clumpety-flap, clumpety-clum-
pety-flap-flap-flap!

Mother brought a basin of warm water and
soap and carefully washed the chair where the
beggar had sat and wiped up the floor silently
and thoughtfully—and almost gently.

XVI

WALLACE HAS HIS APPLE-PIE

AN epidemic of beggars began to haunt the Temple; they could not slip past the porter at the iron gate of the lodge, but they came by way of Fleet Street, or through Mitre Court, or gliding in at the Library gate, slinking past respectable barristers and clerks and making their way, burrow-like, along tunnels and narrow slits, under archways and through alleys, toward the stairs that led to the chambers of the American who was a fool. Sometimes they accompanied Anthony himself, walking, almost erect, beside him—past the porter and the officers and up the Temple Lane and the seventy-three stairs. . . . “He’ll make ye a pair for nothink—and let ye sit in a chair and see him doin’ of it!”

Mother always washed the chair carefully; she provided a bottle of powerful disinfectant, “used by the Royal family,” and after each in-

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vasion sprinkled the walls of the Temple. . . . But it was not Anthony who laid in a stock of hose, assorted sizes, and doled them out to the nondescript bundles that sat watching Anthony's little hammer go tap-tapping around the edges of the soles, and the needle piercing its waxed stitches through the uppers. . . . It was not Anthony who handed out New England cookies in little parcels, and slices of bread and butter.

But it was not only beggars who sat in the wooden chair, with their crafty, shifty glances on Mother's housekeeping, that were privileged to enjoy her New England cooking. Wallace Tilton, arriving breathless at the top of the seventy-three steps, was stayed with goodies from the cupboard. . . . No one can be certain that Wallace was not lured back, day after day, by careless little hints dropped by Mother, as they talked, of what was going to be baked to-morrow in the gas-range in the small kitchen. Certainly Wallace went about all one morning, conversing of steel and a new refining process—millions in it—with the taste of a "new apple-

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pie" haunting his palate—not an apple-tart, such as he had ordered sadly and hopefully for years in English hotels, but a real apple-pie—made of ambrosia and love, with the merest flavour of earthly apples, and a crust of dreams. While he ate it he was kicking bare feet against the table-leg, his tousled hair sticking out of the torn hat, his one suspender hitched tight across the pink calico shirt—happy Wally Tilton, laying his carefully-brushed silk hat on a book case and taking off his immaculate grey gloves to receive from Mother's hand his piece of glorified pie . . . and with each new mouthful, Wally Tilton came back—care free, loyal, eager, forward-looking—as if boyhood and apple-pie lay so close together that you might not taste the one without calling up the other. There is no doubt that better women than Mother might have laboured with Wallace Tilton's soul—and with less happy results. She was such a human, little old body, trotting into her kitchen and out—always with the recuperative pie or cookie or doughnut in her hand

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—scolding about Anthony and scolding about London and shop-keepers—who it seemed did not hesitate to cheat her, only she was getting too sharp for them! Scolding Wallace himself, if things went too ill with her, holding him responsible for all London and its sins.

Let him come in, some dark, sooty morning, choking with gases and yellow-black smut, his nostrils filled with it, his throat raw, his lungs choking, eyes smarting. . . . But let him not therefore hope for comfort from Mother. The coal-strike was on, and Mother laid a tiny piece of coal sparingly on the grate and stood up, brushing imaginary soot from her fingers. "There's no telling when we shall get any more," she said. "They ought to be ashamed of themselves, making coal cost forty shillings a ton—ten dollars, Wally!" She looked at him over reproachful glasses.

"I know—" he looked toward the cupboard door, but Mother had no eyes for cupboards—she was wiping infinitesimal specks of black off the spotless room.

"It's a wicked price!" she said.

"It's a hard life—" ventured Wallace, "working like that, six days a week, out of the sunshine—in the dark and dirt——"

"Sunshine—!" sniffed Mother. "Where is your sunshine—to get out of and go down in a mine from?—Have *you* seen the sun for sixty days, Wallace Tilton?" She might have been the Statue of Liberty towering above him.

"No—" admitted Wallace.

"Nor I!" said Mother. . . . "I don't see as they're so *much* to be pitied—down in clean, warm mines, nice and cosy, like that—no wind and no fog. I don't doubt they have quite nice times, visiting together——"

"Without any air—" objected Wallace.

"They must have air, Wallace—!" She paused in consternation. "They couldn't breathe—without air!"

"Just what's pumped down to them," said Wallace—"How would you like to have your air pumped down—all that you had?"

Mother glanced at her window—up through

the layers of soot and blackness that overhung London. "I should like it," she declared; "I should like it, first-rate, Wally, to have good, clean sunshiny air pumped down to me from up above right here where we are!" She waved a protesting hand. "I suppose the sun *is* shining—somewhere up there, isn't it?"

Wallace smiled a little. "There's a theory it is——"

"I should like some of it!" said Mother—a great wave of homesickness seemed sweeping across her. . . . She went to the window and looked up. A sudden flight of imagination broke forth. "I don't know why they don't run ventilating shafts right up to where it's clean—and pipe it down——"

"So much a foot—?" laughed Wallace.

"I wouldn't mind paying a little," said Mother. She came away from her window.

"You'd have to pay a lot——" said Wallace. "It would be cheaper for you to go and live in a mine at once."

"I shouldn't mind it so much as you think,

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Wallace,—after *London!*” said Mother. “A mine seems to me kind of a comfortable place—all made of good, clean coal so—no garbage or torn paper or anything, and nothing to get dirty—no ashes. If they had white sheets down there, and bedspreads and blankets and white paint, and if the coal kept getting up and floating around the way it does here, little specks of it, into all the cracks and everything——!” Mother paused, breathless.

Wallace laughed. “Poor London!”

Mother’s face softened a little. “I know you like it, Wally; and maybe *I* shall if I stay here ten years, the way you have——” She was going toward the cupboard but she turned back and looked at him, a little awe and commiserating pity in her face. “Ten years——!” she said.

She opened the cupboard door to see what she had left, and took out a large, noble piece of apple-pie and gave it to him; her round affectionate face was full of tolerance and pity.

XVII

THE BOOK SHOP IN SAINT SPARROW'S COURT

ANTHONY stood in front of the bookstall in Saint Sparrow's Court, fingering the books a little, taking them up with thin, slim touch and dipping in—a page here and there—and slipping them back in place. A young clerk, almost a boy, came out with an armful of books, his chin holding the top one steady. He arranged the books on the stall, one eye glancing at the stranger, and disappeared inside. From the end of the court little noises crept in—the traffic of Charing Cross Road slamming by.

It was quiet in Saint Sparrow's Court—only a few footsteps moving behind him breathlessly, breaking in upon him with the sense of other people near. . . . Anthony was not quite used to it, even yet—to being among his thousands and feel the tide pulsing always through, and the great ocean out there beyond with its low

murmur of life. The books were only an excuse, a pretext—to stand there a few minutes longer and feel the tide flow through; and wherever he took his stand he seemed in the heart of London. There must be limits to London—but he had never found its limits. . . . Probably they lay off there somewhere—east or west or north or south—but he had not come to them.

The clerk came out with another armful of books, and dusted them a little and put them in place. He was a most efficient young clerk—his hair shone, his boots shone, his eyes shone and his face. Anthony picked up a book and opened it. “You can tell me how much this is—perhaps?” It was his best opening and the clerk’s eye rested on it, shiningly. He held out his hand. “I’ll find out,” he said, and disappeared inside and reappeared in a breath—“He says it’s sixpence.” He polished the volume a little and waited—he was a very serious young clerk. Anthony felt in his pockets slowly, his fingers skilfully evading a sixpence and bringing out something—a half-crown.

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"Sixpence from two-and-six," chanted the clerk and disappeared again. Anthony looked at the door and followed him in. It was darker inside—a kind of gentle mellow light, falling on the books—brown books and green books and red books—dusty red books—and magazines and folios and prints. . . . Through the doorway into a back room, Anthony could see his clerk getting change from a man at a desk. It was a happy little place, and Anthony took his change and browsed on. The serious clerk disappeared again—down a hole in the wall, looking for more books to dust, and the room was very quiet. Through the doorway Anthony could see the man at the desk, writing—he folded a letter and sealed it and stamped it—and looked up. He fussed a little at things on the desk and got up slowly and came out.

"Good-morning," he said. He seemed about to wander away. But Anthony's look held him and he paused.

"I was looking at your books," said Anthony.

"That's right—look away. Looking won't

wear on 'em much!" He took down a book and looked in it and turned leaves——

"You're from America," he said. He apparently read it from the book.

Anthony looked up. "That's easy to tell— isn't it?"

The other man laughed out—a big genial laugh, with booming hints in it—but mellowed like the books. . . . It came with a sudden effect of surprise in the little brown room. "You've got the look," he said. "You're thin—it's what you call the Southern type, isn't it? Here—" He caught down a book from its shelf and opened it, turning leaves rapidly. "That's the one I mean!" He pointed to a print in "Old Creole Days"—"you've got the same look. . . ." He studied the picture and the man impartially. . . . "But there's a print that's more like you—somewhere—in here—" He led the way into the little back room and Anthony followed him.

"It's here—somewhere—!" said the man! He rummaged through the piles of prints, turning them rapidly, humming a little to himself.

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"Sit down—won't you—yes, sit down—I'll find it. . . . Things run away—they do run—away. Ah—h! Here we are!" He took it out and held it at arm's length and set it on a disorderly shelf among the pile of books and looked at it and laughed out. "Yes, that's the gentleman!" He looked at Anthony critically—"Only you wear two glasses, I see—and he got along with one."

Anthony sitting by the desk, looked at the picture with pleased interest. It was like him—yes—a little—there was the lock of hair that distressed Mother—and the thin face with its monocle and deep-set eyes and sharp-cut lines—half-smiling, half-sardonic—a kind of tragic face. . . . "I don't believe I'm quite like that—" said Anthony.

"No—" The man sat down, studying it. "It was the type—I was thinking of . . . there's a look about you both as if you understood more than you let on—perhaps—" He laughed again, half nervously, and looked at the picture, whistling softly through his teeth.

"*He* had a hard time," he said, nodding toward it.

"Inside, or out?" asked Anthony.

The man shot a quick glance at him—"Both," he replied tersely. "He couldn't live with himself—his friends couldn't either . . . a hard time——"

The clerk came through the hole—out of the wall—with books.

The man felt in his pockets—"Here, Bob, bring us in tea—" He handed out a coin.

Bob put down his books and took the coin and disappeared—perhaps to wash his face and shine his shoes and his eyes before going out.

Some one came into the outer shop and the bookseller went out. Then two young men came in from the street and he greeted them, laughing. Anthony could hear his voice—with the little rolling laugh in it—"Go right in—I'll be there—yes—I'll be there—go right along in——!"

So they came in, and stood in the doorway, and half-nodded, stiffly, at Anthony, and pre-

tended not to see him, or to forget him, and looked at books and talked in low tones.

Then a little breeze swept through the door—and the man came blowing in, sweeping all outdoors in with him—out of his laugh and his smile and his rolling cheer. “Well—well—how are you—how are you—!” He shook hands with the young men all over again and presented them to Anthony—“He’s somebody you’ll like to know,” he said to them; and to Anthony, “These are two young men—they like to paint—think they can paint a little—yes—that’s it—Mr. Cameron—and Mr. Waitley!”

They shook hands with Anthony gravely.

“My name is Wickham,” said Anthony.

“From America,” said the bookseller— “I was just showing him the Whistler. . . . Here, Bob—” The boy stood in the doorway with the tray. “Put it here,” said the man. He pushed the print and books along on the shelf and made room for the tray. “About two more cups we need, Bob. You’ve got ’em down below?”

Bob went through the hole down below—and produced the cups, and cleared a place on the desk—sweeping things into drawers and pigeon-holes with a little shining sloop that left it clear.

“That’s right—that’s right! Now pop along and get your own tea—I’ll look after the shop——”

And Anthony sipped his tea and listened to the young men and looked about the little room. It was more like home than any place he had been in—more like the little shop in Bolton—there was the same brownness of the walls and the dusty smell of leather. But instead of Samuel glowering over his shoes at new ideas and at the changes of the world, there were two young men who seemed to talk only in futures—they made wild, hopeful guesses at the next fifty years; and they believed, modestly and quietly, that they could paint.

XVIII

THE BOOKSELLER

THE bookseller got up and went out to a customer. Through the door they could see him talking with the man—and laughing and getting down books. The customer, a little wrinkled, old man, fussed and asked questions—and the bookseller got down another book. . . .

“Look at him,” said Waitley, sipping his tea with an eye on the door. “—All that trouble—He won’t sell sixpence. Look at him! . . . He doesn’t care——!”

“Dan doesn’t care!” said the other. “It’s all in the day’s work for Dan!”

“Is that his name—Daniel?” asked Anthony. They stared a little. “Don’t you know—Dan!”

Anthony shook his head. “I never saw him before—not till an hour ago.”

They laughed out—"Just like him! We thought you'd known him—years!"

"I suppose his name is outside—on the sign. I didn't happen to notice—" said Anthony thoughtfully.

"You wouldn't have seen if you had noticed. There's another name on the sign."

"He doesn't own this—?" Anthony moved his hand at the room and the small shop beyond. He was a little disappointed. The man seemed to belong to the place, and to the books.

"He owns it all—yes. But he doesn't own a new sign—he's never taken down the sign of the man who owned it thirty years ago. . . . He likes old things." They both laughed.

"New things, too!" said Waitley—he was the younger, smaller, more excited-looking of the two—"You never saw anybody just like Dan," he said.

"I liked him—as soon as I saw him," said Anthony.

"Oh, you'll like him—everybody likes him—

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I don't suppose there's a man in London so mean Dan wouldn't give his last sixpence to——"

Out in the other room, the customer had put his hand reluctantly in his pocket and brought out something.

"Lost your bet!" said Cameron.

"Wait a minute," said Waitley.

"What did he buy, Dan?" The bookseller stood in the door.

He laughed—his gentle roaring laugh. "Paid me a penny he owed from last time," he said. He put it in the box. "Oh—yes—he's a queer old chap!" Dan helped himself to jam—sighing heavily as if the world pleased him. He took a bite of the bread slowly—"Didn't I ever tell you about Felson—? Well—well—yes—" His chuckles sounded from far inside—some-where. "Yes—yes—um-m!"

"Go ahead, Dan!"

The bookseller tasted the story slowly with the bread and jam—before he began . . . and, running over and under and through his words, went the jolly, bubbling, rolling laugh—like

fauns and little fishes and big kind elephants and frisking porpoises in the sun—lighting it up. . . . “He comes in about once a week now,” finished Dan as he took the last piece of bread from the plate.

“Buys you out every time,” suggested Cameron.

“Ha—ha—ha!” The joke roared itself in the comfortable spaces of Dan’s laugh and echoed back a little from the sides—“Yes—that’s so—yes. . . . How’s Ford getting on?” He looked at them with sudden turn.

They exchanged a glance. Dan’s eye caught it—“Anything wrong with Ford?” he asked.

“Dead broke—” said Waitley.

“Didn’t he get that order—from the South Guild?” Dan was looking at them quickly.

“A woman got it!” said Cameron with deep-seated Scotch scorn in his burr—“an æsthetic sort of person,” he added.

Dan roared again—but absently—looking into his empty cup. “We ought to fix him up somehow—” He said it thoughtfully—“You

going to see him to-night?" He looked at them.

"If we can get at him—yes."

"Tell him to drop in—" said Dan. "I know a man—we ought to fix him up somehow. . . . Lots of things. . . ." He got up and went out to the shop whistling a little and laughing nervously and absently—about nothing in particular.

"Dan would find a job for Old Nick himself," said Cameron, looking out toward the room beyond. "He's got a dozen of us—out of work—on his hands now——"

Anthony had sat watching the men—his eyes shining a little. . . . "He gets a good deal out of it," he said quietly.

They turned and looked at him——

"Dan—? He doesn't make his salt!"

"He *is* salt—" said Anthony.

"You're right there," said Waitley. "—Life tastes good to Dan. He's a great old chap!"

Anthony's ear caught the little note of affection and condescension in the words. . . . Dan

was a good chap—yes—not quite the equal of future artists and great ones, perhaps—but a thoroughly good sort . . . and he had, really, a wonderful eye for the right thing—a kind of knack for picking winners—only he would just as lief back a failure apparently, as a winner. Queer, good, old chap—Dan!

They did not say it, in so many words. But as Anthony came to know the little shop and the men who frequented it, he felt it now and then in the air—something of condescending kindness and, with it, a dumb, reaching need of the man and his big laugh. . . . And down underneath all the estimates and opinions, he felt the man's humanness holding them together—loving them all, not because they were great, or clever, or going to be great, but just because—Well, no one could tell quite why Dan loved them—some of them. . . . It was a strange medley in the little back room; old men—they had lived through to—nothing; and young men—they were beginning—and knew a great deal; coarse, heavy-featured men, who liked the

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breadth of the roaring laugh; and delicate, half-degenerate young men who liked its humanness; and young men with the light of morning, who liked it for the freshness ringing in it—Dan's laugh gathered them all under its friendliness—and blessed them—to each other.

Anthony fell into the habit of dropping in to the back room, and listening to the talk and to Dan's laugh—pictures and music and books, the theatre, politics, beggars, social reform, women's hats—nothing human was alien in the back room. . . . M. P's. from the North Country, with a burr in the acquired cockney accent and a little roughness in their coats, fell into the way of knowing something about pictures—looking at them with the eye of faith—that scorned pre-things and post-things—anything that did not peer on ahead at least fifty years; and curly-headed young artists, without a moral to bless themselves with, were drawn into socio-ethical discussions and aired their views—and learned slowly; long-haired essayists and poets and near-sighted egoists joined in the talk—and were

mowed down under Dan's laugh, and came up refreshed and blinking, and thinking well of themselves—and almost as well of one another.

It may have been because Dan did not laugh quite so hard or so often at Anthony, that the others came to listen to his quaint slowness. . . . He did not know much about pictures, or music, or politics, it seemed—but he had something that undergirded them all—and while he talked, Dan would sit, across the desk, a pencil in his fingers, making little meaningless marks, and looking up now and then with a swift glance—a little twinkling, still-born laugh—that went on making marks and listening.

“He knows—” said Dan.

Anthony had gone out, after a kind of hustling talk about the Futurists and their work. “He knows—” said Dan, thoughtfully.

“He's fey,” said Cameron. He was looking at his nails—regretfully—he had a little habit of biting them—due, perhaps, to oatmeal diet, and it troubled his social conscience. . . . “He's got a kind of second-sight to go by,” he

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said, thoughtfully. "He's perfectly right about Carra and Severini, you know. . . . But I'll bet he couldn't tell how he knows it. . . . And you see how he spotted Boceioni—the very pick of the lot——"

"Not by a long chalk!— Boccioni can't . . . !" and the battle raged on—out of blindness and life and the great sunny spaces of Dan's little den and his friendly laugh.

Mother had her own opinion of Dan Boyden's book shop. "It must be a queer sort of place," she confided to Wallace. "He hasn't got a new book in it, hardly, Anthony says. That's one of the pictures he sells—" she pointed to a small rough sketch on the mantel—"Anthony bought it—paid four shillings for it—" she looked at him significantly.

Wallace had walked over to the shelf and picked up the sketch. . . . "It's not bad, you know—!" He looked at it thoughtfully.

"It's queer!" said Mother. She spoke slowly,

looking at it doubtfully. "Maybe it's—English!" she said.

Wallace smiled a little. "I don't know. I never heard of the fellow—" He scanned the name in the corner. "It's French—but that doesn't tell you anything—! He may have been born here. . . . It's a nice little thing and a good reproduction—" He set it back on the shelf; and Mother looked at it swiftly, every now and then, as she went about her work.

Presently she came back to the picture. "How do you tell, Wally?" she asked.

"Tell what?"

"That it's a—'nice little thing'?" She was looking at the picture wistfully.

"Oh—I don't know—it's clean and alive, don't you see—the lines of it—" He came over beside her, looking at it.

"Yes—it's clean—I *try* not to let things get dusty. . . . But I don't know as I should say it was alive. . . ."

XIX

ON BLACKFRIARS BRIDGE

It was a favourite walk with Anthony—out across Blackfriars Bridge and back. He took it every day, sometimes two or three times a day; he grew to know it in all its lights and at every hour, and to know the crowd that streamed across it ceaselessly—hurrying in the grey morning toward the city and hurrying back at night toward something in the long brick rows they called home. Often at sunset the smoke pall was lifted from London and the stream across the bridge and the stream beneath it were lighted by a deep, glowing sky—clouds piled themselves, and the light struck and glinted from the faces, and lay on the green-brown water below, and crept in shadows and a kind of purple mist over scows and belated boats and far-flying gulls. . . . Anthony, looking over the parapet, watched the boats and the sluggish water and the gulls, and felt the crowd passing ceaselessly

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behind. He liked to feel them close—always going, never-resting; his ears listened to the rhythm of feet. Under the hammer of cars on rails and the clang of 'buses and rumbling wheels, he caught a steady-moving hum of feet, the march of life across its bridge; his pulses beat with it—and its tune sang to him a little. . . . When he turned and looked at the faces, he lost for a moment the march of feet; the faces were tired or sad or set vacantly ahead—only the feet marched together. Deep in some inner place, they caught a common rhythm—out of sadness and harshness and injustice, they moved across the bridge. Anthony, with his back to the parapet, watched them pass and re-pass—all the shoes of London, old and new; and the old ones hastened pace, because the new ones stepped to hope; and the rhythm slowed itself to take them up . . . beat-along, beat-along, London feet— You could not stand long on Blackfriars Bridge without feeling the pulse of London—flowing to the heart and back—

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The shoes of London troubled Anthony, the shapes of the moving feet on the bridge—It was not only that they were ragged and broken and needed mending—they seemed to be saying something to him—all of them together. . . . Gradually he came to see that two patterns covered them all—two lasts had served to give the shapes; there were heavy, working shoes—with stubbed, clumping lines—and a little obstinate and harsh and dull as the heels wore down or sides bulged and toes raised themselves and gaped; and there were the gentle, polite shoes—with slim lines and long, thin vamps—shoes that did not tread the ground so much as move upon it graciously. Anthony watched them—only two kinds; and each he recognised and placed upon its last—plebeian and aristocrat, high and low and rich and poor. Sometimes a heavy foot had thrust itself into the slim shoe, and minced a little and spread wide upon its cheap, aristocratic-aping sole; but more often it was the shoe itself that was degraded—the old, slim, aristo-

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cratic last adjusted to a tradesman's foot, and playing at being genteel.

Anthony's eye followed them all, and made swift adjustments—a little shortening here, a shading there—the slim last had been too thin, the clumping one too heavy; each must give way a little, to the normal human foot. . . . Anthony saw it in his mind—the firm, human foot, springing with spirit from the ground, at home on the earth . . . he had made many shoes from that last—for rich men and poor men. . . . One day, staring down at the moving feet, he gave a little start and glanced up. The glance that met his eye smiled back, and the stranger touched his hat—and was gone. An American. . . .

Anthony drew a little breath, and his eyes followed the retreating back—too slouching and thin, not well set up, not trim and well-brushed—any English clerk would carry himself more sprucely, half the crowd moving past wore trimmer coats—more compactly buttoned . . .

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but the feet of the man—set toward the morning. . . . Anthony's eyes followed him—the countryman with the slouching, half-formed back and careless head and quick step. . . . Slowly something crystallised in him, something that for weeks had been gathering itself from the traffic of Blackfriars and the sky and Thames.

The spirit of England—A house divided against itself—high and low—no middle ground. He held the thought, as he might have held it on the shoemaker's bench, turning it slowly—looking at it from every side, half thinking, half feeling his way to the truth that beat its rhythm upon the bridge. . . . A nation longing for democracy—and separated forever by its shoes—the shoes of the past. Only shoes of high and low, plebeian and aristocrat. . . . All the great middle class that should have been men and women standing firm, reaching up and reaching down, were content with the shoes of the dead. . . .

Anthony felt the unrest surging on the bridge, pulsing to the farthest limits of the great town—

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strikes and threats, vague stirrings of resentment . . . he saw the Syndicalist pacing the deck, his hair blown in the wind. . . . This was what it meant—the mutterings underneath—a great middle class in need of shoes—and no shoes ready for them—only clumsy, lumbering peasant boots, spruced up a little, and the slim, dapper boots of a bygone aristocracy. His quickened eye followed the lines again—to shorten them here and make them firm—to lengthen that line and lighten it and fit it to the foot—his fingers moved of themselves a little; and in his heart the understanding grew—the understanding that had been slowly coming to him out of the eyes of beggars and men and women, and it became a sudden quick sympathy for a nation—a whole nation—condemned to wear shoes that did not fit—without insight to make them fit or courage to throw away the old last, to take new measures for the men—half-tradesmen, half-heroes—who walked in the cramped, ill-fitting shoes of England dead. . . .

One class, Anthony noted, stood apart—well-

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shod, their heavy, serviceable boots alert and competent; one class did not aspire—in silk hat and frock coat and smug green-grocer countenance—to rise a little in the scale; one class did not look down—with lofty, clean-cut gaze—upon the wallowings of the poor; firm on both feet, they overlooked the crowd—the one class that stood neither to gain or lose by unrest—England's truly great ones—the Metropolitan police. Anthony never passed one of them—standing symbol of the Bank of England—with his straight gaze under the set helmet and the little smile between the chin-strap and crisp moustache—that he did not look his fill at the comfortable happy foot, in its well-fitting shoe—not too heavy for comfort, not too light for service—the one shoe in England that fitted; his eyes dwelt on it happily, and when he saw a brace of them—swinging out from their station to report on duty—he turned and followed them with his gaze—as long as the blue, easy-swinging figures remained in sight. . . . This strange great brotherly nation—with shoes that pinched,

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and shoes that chafed, that he was coming to understand and to love.

Thoughts like these—half-confused, half-felt—flitted in and out through Anthony's mind as he stood watching the crowd surge across the bridge. . . . It was the American that had started the flitting thoughts—the American with amused glance and trim, well-shod feet; there had been only the amused, half-flickering glance—and he was gone—and the democratic vistas that his shoes had opened were gone.

Anthony sighed a little and moved on. Sometimes, in all the moving crowd, he felt a little lonely. Even Dan Boyden's shop left him lonely sometimes; he wanted to talk with all these people on the bridge about the kind of shoes they wore and the principles of Democracy. . . . Anthony strolled slowly on. Suddenly he stopped and looked down—it was quite a different pair, and they were standing firmly planted, beside the parapet—not American shoes—no—too broad and firm for American make . . . and these shoes had walked in a

Past—but not the English past—too cosmopolitan for English lines. . . . Slowly Anthony's eyes lifted themselves and his glance travelled up a pair of straight, vigorous, English legs and to a slim waistcoat and smooth-shaven chin and a pair of eyes that were looking down on him, a little absently, it seemed—it was a fine old face, several hundred years old. Anthony's eyes dropped again to the shoes—hand-made, in every line—a master workman, craftsman, artist-worker—Anthony lifted his eyes again to the man's ancient face——

“Those are very unusual boots you are wearing, sir—” he said.

The face stared at him.

Anthony made a polite gesture toward the shoes—he spread his palms a little, as if paying homage—to perfect workmanship. And the man's eye dropped—a smile came to his face. “There's only one man in the world can make a pair like them,” he said. The boots planted themselves a little more firmly on the bridge and Anthony stood looking at them with happy eyes.

The man's glance rested on him, half-amused . . . the fellow seemed to think he had a *right* to stare—as if one were a show window, or picture-gallery—The feet moved a trifle——

Anthony looked up. "I should like to see the man who did them—" he said quietly. "Does he live in London, sir?"

"In London?—no." The man turned away. He looked back—the fellow was staring—rapt in a vision. The boots turned back a little—"They were made in Berlin," said the man.

He could not have told why he volunteered it—but, really, if you find a man reading an anonymous poem—on your toes—with idiotic delight—you *have* to tell him—if you know—"A man in Berlin—" he said. "His name—I forget—Schnappes, it might be——"

Anthony's face was alight—"I am going to Berlin," he said quietly. "I shall see him."

"He'll make you a pair—if you pay him." The man had grown brusque. He turned to move on.

But Anthony's voice held him a minute. "I

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want to talk to him—" said Anthony. "There must be a great many things he knows—things that I have—thought about."

The man wheeled about and glanced down, sharply—— No, the fellow was not mad—not even touched with oddity—it seemed—only open and straight. . . . The man, too, moving in his crowd, was often lonely. Sometimes it seemed that there was no one in England to talk to— He looked again, sharply, at the quiet face.

"I can give you the address—the man that made them—if you want it," he said.

"I should like it," said Anthony. "I am going to Berlin—with my son."

The man scribbled on a piece of paper and held it out. "That is my address," he said, "and I have the man's, at home somewhere—if you will come for it."

"I will come—any time," said Anthony. He took the paper, smoothing it in his fingers.

"To-morrow then—about tea-time." He touched his hat a little and moved away through



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the crowd. Anthony watched him go. He felt somewhere a kind of a warm glow—as if the man were a friend . . . moving away through the crowd.

XX

ANTHONY MEETS A LORD

MOTHER took the paper and put on her glasses and read it slowly—"Raleigh, 63 Portland Square——"

"Raleigh's a part of the place, I suppose, kind of a handle to it," she remarked; "seems as if they tried to see how many names they could have to a place—over here."

"Over here" covered everything that was English—and outlandish.

Anthony studied the paper. "I thought maybe Raleigh was the man's name," he said.

"Sir Walter Raleigh—," said Mother promptly. "That's what you're thinking of. There isn't any 'Sir' on this, is there—or 'Mr.,' or anything—You'll find it's just some queer idea about where he lives."

And having disposed of Portland Square and its queerness, Mother began to set the table for

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supper. They always had "supper," a good New England supper, at half-past five.

Wallace was coming to-night. He had fallen into a way of coming in for supper, making it his tea and dining at an hour that would have surprised Mother if he had happened to mention it. But, though Wallace still went to the theatre, he did not so often find his way around to the back of the stage after the play. Before Mother dawned on London—with her pies—it had been the expected thing for Wallace Tilton—"the rich American, you know—" to come around to the back of the stage and take two or three of them to supper. Now, reproachful glances over the footlights and even illspelled little notes seemed to have no effect on Wallace. "He's up to something new," they pronounced, and gradually they left him to himself. He was not the only man in London—even if he had the money.

And Wallace was beginning slowly to compute whether he had the money—and how much—and why—and looking into his affairs gener-

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ally. . . . In time he turned his attention to the office—old projects, that he had forgotten, recurred to him and he tightened his hand on them, and on the business as a whole. There could be no question that he was “up to something new.” The company did not go behind returns. If they had heard of the famous pie-and-doughnut cure, they would probably have smiled, incredulous. The main thing was, that the business “over there” was steadying itself—and Wallace Tilton was making it pay.

Mother looked in her cupboard and took out her best goodies and set them on the table and sent Anthony out for cheese, and made the tea, and was ready when the two men came in together to beam upon them—out of a clear conscience and a heartfelt of love.

She had intended to ask Wallace about Portland Square, but a proposal to take her to Epping Forest the next day drove it out of her head.

It was not till just as she was about to start with Wallace the next afternoon—a little parcel

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of ginger-snaps stowed in her black bag—that she remembered Anthony's "man."

"I declare, I meant to go there with you," she said. "But you can find it all right—and tell me about it when you get back."

So she departed—to join Wallace at the bottom of the seventy-three steps. He did not climb them oftener than was necessary—though he suspected that a certain feeling of lightness in his legs was partly due to frequent exercise on the seventy-three steps.

Anthony, left alone, fussed about the room a little, whistling to the canary and making ready to call on his friend in Portland Square. "About tea-time," the man had said—that would be any time from four to six. . . . Anthony put on clean linen and brushed himself carefully; even Mother would hardly have found fault with him when he was ready; he had a kind of gentle pride in his clothes, and the shoes he wore were his best ones—but not the equal of those on Blackfriars Bridge. He had never seen a pair

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as perfect as those. He hoped his friend would wear them to-day.

It was his "friend" he was going to see—he had not thought of him in any other way since he watched him disappear in the crowd. . . . He smoothed the paper and tucked it in his pocket and started out.

The butler dropped a severe eye on him. "You must have made a mistake." He said the words stiffly, his hand reaching back to the wide-open door and drawing it toward him.

Anthony's glance held it a second. "I thought the name was Raleigh." He drew out the paper and held it toward the severe countenance—not to confute it, but seeking courteous information.

The butler's eye paused—without interest—and flickered a little—and held itself—and darted down at the paper. He made a little pecking motion toward it, and the door opened grudgingly.

Anthony stepped in. He looked up at the

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high walls—pictures and brackets and screens—and at a great staircase ascending by a stained-glass window.

The butler turned away. “What name shall I give his Lordship?” he asked.

Anthony’s gaze dropped gently from the stained-glass to the butler’s face. “Wickham,” he said. He uttered it out of a kind of dream. He had never been in a place like this. . . . It pleased his fancy—and he looked about him happily.

“Wickham—” The butler’s teeth held it, with a little wrench. He eyed the slim, gentle figure again. There are all sorts of lords—He moved toward a door, borne on stately calves, and waved a figurative hand, and Anthony entered the high-ceiled, gracious room. Through the open doorway he watched the two stately calves ascend the wide staircase and the lofty head outline itself against the glass. . . . It was very quiet in the room—no sound could have touched the soft-hanging curtains and thick rugs and the delicate blending colour of porcelain and

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leather and bronze. Anthony had stepped into another London—the bleary, red-eyed beggars faded to a flickering fringe of dreams, and Dan Boyden's bookshop rolled away in a laugh. He turned his head and looked about him—and down the long vista in its subdued light. . . . He had always known there was a place like this somewhere. . . . Even on his shoemaker's bench, tapping in the dim light, with fat Samuel opposite scowling at soles, he had felt there was a place like this. . . .

The butler stood exactly in the centre of the door—his heels exactly together, and his level glance ahead—"His Lordship will see you," he commanded, and Anthony looked at him vaguely and followed him up the wide staircase to a great, closed, oak door; the butler bent his head and knocked—and straightened himself and opened it—standing with heels together and the level, impersonal gaze.

Anthony heard the door click behind him and he looked up. He was in a room full of sunshine—pouring down from the lighted roof and

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in at the windows—and his friend was crossing the room to meet him.

“How are you?—Glad you found your way—Sit down.” He drew forward a chair and Anthony sat down—still in his dream.

His host sat opposite him, his knees crossed—and one foot swinging lightly. It was shod in a shining slipper, patent leather and fine in texture, but the same last as the boots of Blackfriars Bridge.

Anthony bent toward it—“The same man—?” he said smiling.

The other thrust it out a little. “Schnappes—yes. He does for me entirely—I found his address somewhere—” He got up and fumbled in the mass of papers on a table and found it; but he did not give it up—he held it in his fingers and the talk drifted to America—and back to London. Anthony’s mind expanded and relaxed; little whimsical thoughts came to him—thoughts that he had never mentioned to Samuel, or even to Mother, or in Dan Boyden’s shop.

The man opposite with the gentle-swinging

foot, laughed a little, now and then—and tasted the slow Yankee flavour with delicate palate. He, too, was a little tired of fat Samuels and obsequious attendants—and friends. He had never been talked to quite in this way—by a shoemaker. . . . It all came out as Anthony talked—the little shop in Bolton, Samuel and Simon and the checker-board and the Ministers—with tombs and gateways and itineraries; Anthony's mind played with it, and laughed—and the man played with it, too—he did not argue, or explain, or instruct; his foot swung happily, a little awkwardly, and now and then he laughed out and got up and stretched himself and walked across the room—the sunshine falling on the white hair and keen, thin, gentle face and the delicate hands. One of the hands still held the slip of paper with the address, and it gestured as he talked.

Tea came in—with hovering attendants, broadcloth backs that withdrew and left the kettle glistening and steaming gently in the sun. The host came over and poured it out and they

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drew nearer the fire, still talking—the light from above lessened in the room; it grew dim, and the firelight conquered it, before his lordship held out the slip of paper in his thin fingers and Anthony stood up, blinking a little.

“I’ll give you a note to him if you like. You must come to my place up in the country. You’ll like it there, I think. We have a great deal to talk about. I am glad to have met you—” He held out his hand.

So Anthony found his way down the spacious stair-case where His Stiffness offered a hat in respectful fingers and held the door wide for him to go. “Wickham”—Lord Wickham—? It might be—you never can tell—with these modern Lords. He closed the door softly and respectfully behind the shoemaker-lord; and Anthony went down the steps—back to his long, drab world of shoes and beggars and shuffling feet.

XXI

MOTHER AND THE LONDON BUS

So, through shoes and through beggars and a lord or two, and through the book-shop and Wallace Tilton, London opened its doors to Anthony Wickham and his wife.

To Mother, it is true, it made small difference whether doors opened or not; safe behind her own door, her two doors, with her canary and her gas-stove, she found plenty to do. She only left the nest on swift, hurried forays for food, hurrying along Fleet Street—through the rumble and traffic—with her net-bag grasped tight around the top, darting in at the Temple Gate at last with a sigh of relief. Under Wallace's protecting wing, she explored wider reaches—but always with a little superior, detached scorn that left her untouched by the roaring life about her.

Perhaps her nearest conception of it came

from the top of 'buses, where mounted high out of danger she looked down on silly London scudding this way and that.

"It's a kind of game, London is, isn't it, Wally?" she said one day.

They were sitting on the top of No. 13, on the front seat, and they had halted a minute, before an outstretched blue arm, on the verge of Piccadilly. Mother leaned over the front board and looked on the hurrying, scurrying, shooting mass—She watched the taxis rush and turn and thread their way, grazing by a breath's gaze with their sliding wheels.

"It's a kind of game, Wally!—If you watch, up here, you can see how they do it, can't you!"

Wally leaned over beside her and watched the game. He had no longer any shy discretion at being seen on the front seat of No. 13, with a little round woman beaming in a bonnet. He seemed to have come into a place where such things did not matter. . . . He watched the shining, darting wheels. It *was* a game—the game of London, playing on the stones. . . .

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A cool head and quick hand to play it; but there was zest about it—give and take, seize your chance—keep it on the move. . . . The block gave way—the policeman's big foot strolled to the curb. No. 13 seized its chance and darted by a slower-witted, waiting 'bus and dodged in front and honked a little and was off on chugging wheel. "Full-up, full-up!" chanted the conductor his voice coming up, courteous and wary, from below—"Sorry, sir—Full-up, full-up!"—and pedestrians scowled up and turned away, and seized another chance—and Number 13 went chugging, chumping, rumbling on its way.

It was on a Whitechapel 'bus that Motner came on Tony Wasson. She saw him from the top and insisted on getting down to speak to him. "I know it's him, Wally. He's got on the shoes Anthony mended for him—and the stockings I gave him, I don't doubt." She stood up, wavering plumply as the 'bus came to a halt, and Wallace helped her down the corkscrew stair. The 'bus had gone by the sham-

bling figure; and they wandered back, looking here and there in the crowd.

"He's gone by this time, Mother. You won't find him—better take the next 'bus——"

But Mother was firm, and at last they came on him, at a turn, bending to adjust the thick strap of the basket on his shoulder. He let fall the strap when he saw the round face in its bonnet.

He touched his hat—"Morning, ma'am——"

Mother held out her hand. She had liked this man—the best of them all—her keen eyes had detected a difference; he had not whined when he accepted the stockings and the mended shoes; and when she handed him cookies he had looked at her straight. "The children would like them," he had said. Mother had thought of the children many times since—as she rolled out her cookies, or took them, brown and fragrant, from her oven—"Did they like them?" she asked, still holding out her hand.

The man rubbed his hand, a little shyly, on his coat, and took the round one.

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"They had a treat with 'em, ma'am," he said. "They've spoke about it since—many a time." He bent his shoulder again toward the strap.

Mother looked curiously into the basket. "You're selling bananas," she said.

She fingered them a little and talked and Tony talked . . . and Mother counted her change.

In the end, two dozen bananas bulged in Wallace's arms, and they were walking along with Tony, the heavy strap adjusted to his shoulder—the youngest child was ill, yes—a fever. He climbed up the stairs, ahead of them, and opened the door cautiously.

A young woman, in a nurse's cap and apron, came forward with her finger at her lip.

Tony Wasson pointed to his companions and slipped the strap from his shoulder. The nurse beckoned them into another room, closing the door softly—"He's asleep," she said.

"How is he?" asked the man. His hands hung at his sides and the fingers fumbled a little at his coat.

"Better," said the nurse. "The fever broke

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this morning. He will feel like himself when he wakes."

Other children came hurrying up the stair from school, and the nurse set out luncheon for them, and quieted them. Wallace Tilton, sitting at one side, watched her waiting on the children. Mother talked with Tony Wasson. . . . By-and-by she tiptoed into the bedroom; the children, with another slice of bread and a banana from the basket, rushed back to school.

The nurse stirred something in a little basin on the stove. Mother came out and beckoned to her and they talked, the nurse stirring the gruel with careful, listening spoon; she looked up and smiled and nodded and they went into the bedroom. When they came out Wallace and Tony Wasson were deep in Woman's Suffrage. "She could vote all right—" Tony jerked a thumb toward the basin of gruel in the window. "*She* could do it all right—It's them hus-sies in the shops as I wouldn't trust—wi' the vote—nor wi' anything!" he added darkly.

The nurse appeared in the doorway. "He's

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waked up," she said. "He's like himself. She took up the basin of gruel, blowing it a little——

Tony went into the bedroom.

Mother gathered up her black bag and straightened her bonnet a little and put on her cotton gloves. "I'll send 'em right away——" she said, "this afternoon—Wally'll see to it."

XXII

NURSE TIMBERLAKE

ANTHONY was ill. Mother discovered it long before Anthony knew it himself. When he refused the doughnut she looked at him sharply. That afternoon she scurried out to a chemist's and brought back a packet of boneset, which she steeped on the gas-stove and gave him, bitterly, to drink. The next day he refused the piece of pie, and she told Wallace.

"He's heavy and logy, and his head's hot; he didn't take the doughnut. I don't see how I can have him sick in London."

Wallace suggested a doctor. The next day Anthony stayed in all day, and at night the doctor came.

"A little fever—nothing serious; keep him quiet and feed him light."

Mother put on her second-best apron and sent Wallace for beef-extract. But Wallace was not

always at hand, and Mother toiled up and down seventy-three steps many times a day; loss of sleep began to tell on her. Wallace proposed a nurse.

Mother shook her head. "I don't want any strange woman taking care of *him*," she said.

"Have a man."

"He'd be in the way," said Mother.

The next day when Wallace appeared Mother looked up and squinted a little through her glasses—some one was with him. Mother looked again. She held out both hands. "Well, I'm glad to see *you*," she said.

The nurse smiled. "Mr. Tilton said you mightn't want me——"

"I told Wally I didn't want any *strange* women around—he might 'a' known, well enough, I'd want *you*—How's the little boy?"

"He's quite well—in school again—I saw him yesterday." The nurse had taken off her long cape and bonnet and was moving about the room as if she had always lived there.

Mother watched her approvingly. "You're

the kind to take right hold—I don't know why I didn't think of you—How did Wally find you?"

"He enquired of Tony, I suppose—most of my work lies in that district; I was just through with a case—" She glanced at the adjoining room—"You can lie down now and get a good rest. I'll call you if I need anything."

"You don't know where things are——"

The nurse smiled. "I think I can find them here. I'm used to places where everything's in confusion, you know."

"Well—I guess I'll let you. I *am* tired." Mother took off her glasses and put them in their case. "You can stay all the afternoon, can you?" she asked doubtfully.

"As long as you want me—Mr. Tilton said you might need me some time."

So Mother lay down in the darkened room and fell asleep like a child; and Nurse Timberlake went to and fro, smiling at the compact arrangement of the little set of chambers. There was everything in the big cupboard that one

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could need for a siege, and the coal-box was filled to the top.

She was not accustomed to having everything to hand. Many of the places where she went to nurse had no cupboard; and when they had one it was, more often than not, empty; and coal came by the scuttleful. . . . It was part of the strenuous training, to evoke coal from the depths, and to make gruel of water and air, and a very little flour—and be thankful for salt. Often during her apprenticeship she had cried at night from aching feet and from the ignorance and emptiness of cupboards. Now, it was all in the day's work. What the dispensary could supply, she took promptly; and what could not be supplied, either by the dispensary or the society or by mother-wit, she went without. The sentiment of over-pity for herself, or for the very poor, was a luxury! She had let luxuries go—when she became district nurse.

She bent over Anthony, offering the cup of broth, and he drank it slowly—

“Where is Mother?” he asked.

"Lying down—asleep," said Nurse Timberlake.

"That's good—" It was hardly more than a faint whisper—"How did you get in?" he asked after a minute.

The nurse smiled. "It's all right—she knows I'm here. She wants me."

Anthony's face relaxed. "You—under—stand Mother—" he said, and dozed contentedly.

An hour later, when Wallace came back, the nurse was sitting by the window under the bird-cage, reading. A cloth had been thrown over the cage to keep the bird quiet. She looked up, as the door opened, and put up her finger and came out to the landing, closing the door softly behind her.

"How are they?" he said.

"Sleeping—both of them—" she held one hand on the door, ready to go back.

"Is there anything I can do—or get?" He was noticing that little white caps make a pretty frame for a youngish face.

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The face shook itself. "There isn't anything any one can get. I never saw such a cupboard——"

Wallace smiled back—"That's Mother!" He stood a few minutes longer, asking about Anthony, and noting how the light from the window fell on the face, making little rays of the cap-frill. . . . "Well, let me know—I won't come in—no. There's a telephone on the ground floor. I asked as I came up—you can use it, yes. Good-day——"

He went slowly down the steps, a feeling of relief gathering with each flight—She was evidently competent—and Mother needed some one—and not bad looking. . . . He ran down the last few steps like a boy—he would come back to enquire again, before he went to sleep.

XXIII

A GOOD WIFE FOR JOHN

“SHE’LL make a good wife for John—” announced Mother.

Anthony was sitting up, with a blanket across his knees. Mother had just given him his broth. Nurse Timberlake was gone for a walk in the Embankment Gardens. Wallace Tilton had insisted on her going for a walk, and had attended to it by going with her himself as she started away.

They were sitting on a bench watching three ragamuffins tumbling on the back of the bench just beyond. A gentleman in a silk hat, sat erect at the end of the bench nursing his cane—after a minute he rose and walked stiffly away; the three boys stared after him—they turned another somersault, kicking their heels—one of them wore a shabby shoe laced neatly to the top, the other foot entirely bare.

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Wallace watched them tumble—"Poor little beggars!" he said.

Nurse Timberlake smiled. "They're not hungry," she replied.

He looked at her. "How do you know?"

"One gets to tell."

Three soldiers, off duty, came clinking into sight along the gravel path, marching abreast—legs free, heads up, chins in; they passed the bench of ragamuffins, and swung on. . . . The ragamuffins floated to the ground and picked up the step and strode behind, backs stiff, heads up, chins in air—the glory of the British Army in their heels.

Wallace Tilton laughed. "I believe you're right! How did you get to know them so well?"

They got up and strolled on through the Park, talking of her work and of London. They had walked many times like this in the Gardens. Anthony had been ill five weeks now, and they had fallen into a way of coming to the Gardens when Nurse Timberlake took her afternoon time

off. She would be going away soon. Anthony was better—nearly well—but Wallace had persuaded her to stay. Mother needed her, he had said.

Mother looked again over her glasses, shrewdly, at Anthony. "She'll make the best kind of wife for John," she said.

Anthony smiled a little, "Better than Lydia Bacon?" he asked.

Mother looked at him. "I shouldn't have let him marry Lydia—in any case . . . and he never wanted to marry her!" she added triumphantly.

"No—" Anthony looked up at the west window. Great clouds of light were flooding the sky. "How long is it before John comes?" he asked.

"Three weeks," said Mother, promptly. "He'll have a chance to see her. I'm going to invite her to tea some afternoon. I've got it all planned out!" She rolled up her work and laid it aside.

Anthony reached a thin hand to her. "Don't count too much, on—John, Mother," he said gently.

Mother looked at him. "You feeling all right, Anthony?"

"Yes—" He smiled. "I'm all right—but I don't want you to be disap—" Mother had disappeared into her kitchen. . . . "She may be interested in somebody else—" said Anthony softly.

Mother did not hear. She was absorbed in something on her stove—communing with it—and before she had finished, Nurse Timberlake came back from her walk—nothing more could be said about a suitable wife for John.

Nurse Timberlake looked at Anthony. "You would better lie down," she said.

"Yes—I'm ready." He stood up, wavering a little—"Not very husky yet—am I?"

She placed a hand on his shoulder. "You'll do—You're much better than yesterday." She drew the coverlet over him and made him comfortable. Then she stood a minute, arranging

the papers on the table. Anthony had been looking them over, and they were scattered about among the glasses and bottles.

The nurse gathered them into a little pile. Suddenly she stopped—she glanced from the paper in her hand to Anthony—and back to the slip of paper. But Anthony's eyes were closed—he had fallen asleep—it was part of the weakness from the fever. She glanced again at the paper and put it with the others, slipping an elastic band about them and putting them in the table drawer by the bed.

When she returned to the sitting-room, Mother was in her chair by the window sewing.

Nurse Timberlake crossed over to the window and stood looking at the clear-lighted sky. "Do you know a Lord Raleigh?" she asked carelessly.

Mother's head inclined and she looked over the tops of her glasses. "Anthony knows him—" she said. "I never felt just sure about his being a Lord," she added dryly.

Nurse Timberlake smiled. "Yes—he's a Lord. I saw the name on a slip of paper in

there—that was why I asked.” She turned back again to the window.

“Anthony’s been to see him, two or three times,” said Mother—“before he was taken sick. He was meaning to take me. But I kind of put it off. It never seemed just right to run in any time to see a Lord—and I kept putting it off. . . . I thought I’d get a new bonnet, maybe. I don’t suppose I shall see him now—not unless John wants to go. You know my son is coming—?” She looked at her again over the glasses—shrewdly.

And the nurse smiled a little. Mrs. Wickham had said her son was coming—every afternoon for five weeks.

XXIV

THE QUESTION OF A BONNET

THE next morning a letter came for Anthony. It was signed "Raleigh," and it enquired tersely where he was keeping himself——

"You answer it for him, won't you, Nurse—just tell him Anthony's been sick, and I've been busy——"

So Nurse Timberlake wrote a little note to Lord Raleigh, saying that Mr. Wickham had been ill, but was now recovering favourably; he hoped to see Lord Raleigh before leaving London. She signed it "Mary Wickham," and, after a moment, "per A. T."—and sealed it, with a little smile on her lips.

His Lordship, when he received the note, looked at the address and ordered his car and, after one or two errands in the city, drew up in Middle Temple Lane at the foot of the Plowden

Buildings. At the third flight he paused for breath, and arrived at the top a little spent.

Mother opened the door. She looked at him, and put her hand to her head—with some vague idea of a best bonnet—and held it out, smiling from her round face. "You must be—the Lord," she said.

He smiled a little and took the hand, gallantly. "How is Mr. Wickham?"

"Come right in," said Mother. She opened the door wide, and he stepped in and stopped, looking at a figure in nurse's cap and apron, that stood by the window.

She came forward, smiling, and held out a hand. "How are you, Cousin Thurlow?" she said.

"How de' do, Allie? Where'd you light from?"

"I've been nursing Mr. Wickham."

"Good idea!—you couldn't do better. How is he?"

She ushered him into Anthony's room and left them . . . little laughs came out of the half-

open door, and scraps of talk, and long, murmuring words, and laughs again. She came and stood in the door at last.

"Time for Mr. Wickham to rest," she announced.

His Lordship got to his feet—"Well, I'm driven out. Remember you're coming to my place—as soon as you can stir." He came out into the sitting-room, smiling. "We'll make him well at Thurlow. Best air in England. I'm going up next week myself—" he paused. "How soon can he be moved?"

"Ten days—perhaps."

"That's right. You'll come, too, won't you?"

"As a nurse?" she took his hand, smiling.

"Anyway you like." He bowed himself over the hand and over Mother's—and was gone.

Mother blinked a little. "I don't feel as if I could go," she said pathetically. "I'd rather stay right here—"

"Mr. Wickham can't go alone," said Nurse Timberlake.

"No—*You* might go with him—?"

"I'm thinking of it," said Nurse. "I'd rather like to go—Thurlow is my old home," she added after a little pause.

Mother beamed on her. "You know the neighbourhood then, don't you?"

The nurse smiled. "Yes, I know the village. I know the Castle too—quite well."

Mother gave a little wail—"He didn't tell me it was a castle—! I can't go—if it's a castle!"

The nurse reassured her. "It's not so different from any other house—except, of course, that it's old—part of it dates back four hundred years or so."

"I thought castles had towers and top-pieces and moats, and things?" said Mother.

"Yes—there are towers. But modern houses have towers, you know."

"So they do," assented Mother. "I never liked towers—" she added after a moment. "And the moats must be damp—dreadful damp."

I don't believe Anthony will like it—Where do you get your bonnets?"

"My bonnets—?" the nurse started a little. "Oh—at Selfridge's."

"I'll see what I can do to-morrow," said Mother.

XXV

WALLACE SELECTS IT

WALLACE offered to go with her. Nurse Timberlake could not leave Anthony, and Mother must not be trusted alone among the pitfalls and snares of Oxford Street.

So Wallace accompanied her. He escorted her down aisles of gloves and veilings and cosmetics and underwear, suits and coats and draperies, and to the millinery department and a smart young woman clerk. Mother retreated into her shell; and Wallace and the ladylike clerk decided between them what she should wear. It seemed difficult, at first, among the wheels of fashion, to find anything that would do to halo a small, round, wrinkled face—but, at last, from the back of a bottom drawer, a little straw structure was produced and placed on Mother's head; the clerk stood back to survey it with lifted eyebrows, one hand resting on her

hip. Wallace walked around it, and gave advice, and paid for it and took Mother away.

"Do you think it's fancy enough for a castle, Wally?" she asked as the lift descended slowly to the ground.

"Quite fancy enough," said Wallace decidedly. "You won't wear it all the time, you know—" He paused, looking at her. "You ought to have a cap!" he said.

"Wallace!" She put a distressed hand to her head. "I'm not old enough—for a cap!" She looked at him anxiously. "You don't mean I'm old enough—for a cap—do you?"

"Any age is old enough, now," said Wallace. "Everybody wears 'em—I think you'd be stunning in a cap—Come on, and try one on!" So they descended to the cap department, and Mother sat in front of a long mirror, and Wallace fitted caps to the meek roundness of her face.

"There!" he stood back and looked at it. "You couldn't be better! Look at yourself."

She took the hand mirror and turned her head critically, surveying the little white affair, front

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and back. "It looks queer," she said. "But it's becoming!" She beamed on him.

"Of course it is—just the thing for you! You'd better keep it." He gave the young woman a coin and received the cap in a neat box.

Mother's eye rested on it contentedly. "I shall like it to wear in the Castle," she said. "It doesn't seem just right, somehow, to wear your own hair—in a castle."

"That's what they used to think," said Wallace. "I suppose that's why they got to wearing wigs and headdresses and things—to live up to castles."

"I know how they felt," said Mother.

When they reached home, she donned the cap at once. "I want to get used to it before we go to the Castle," she said. "I have to wear my things quite a spell—before I get used to 'em. I never feel as if they were my things—the first week or so."

There could be no doubt that the cap exercised a subtle influence on Mother's thoughts. She

no longer protested against going with Anthony, and Nurse Timberlake more than once suspected her of little budding desires to display the cap in lordly halls.

"Caps help you to keep up," explained Mother. "You know you look good, no matter how you feel inside!"

"It's the same with shoes," said Anthony—"sometimes when I've made a pair for a mean man—a real mean one—I've thought I ought to take extra pains with 'em—so he could walk better. . . . I used to think sometimes it made a difference with Jo' Haskell," he mused.

"It'd take more than *one* pair of shoes to make a man of Jo' Haskell!" said Mother. "Maybe it helped," she added kindly. The cap seemed to have smoothed little asperities of judgment—much as it softened the lines of the wrinkled face.

"I wish you was going Wally," she announced the next day.

Wallace glanced across at the open door. Nurse Timberlake was in the next room with An-

thony. "I wish I were," he said softly. "It will be mighty lonesome with all of you gone, you know."

Mother looked at him pityingly. "Of course it will be! I don't know why I didn't think of it before. . . . I've 'most a good mind to stay now——"

"And waste your cap?" said Wallace.

"Of course I'll have to go—" said Mother hastily—"now I've said I would. But it don't seem right leaving you alone."

"John will be along pretty soon," said Wallace. "He'll take your rooms—won't he? So I shall be running in here just the same."

Mother looked a little guilty.

"John's coming to the Castle," she said. "The Lord asked him."

"He did!" said Wallace. "I thought John had business to attend to, and by the time he'd finished that, you would all be coming back."

"He's going to take a rest first," said Mother, beaming. "It was *my* idea—I told the nurse I thought he ought to—and she told the Lord,

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and he asked him. It will be a real good chance to—visit.”

“How long will Nurse Timberlake stay?” asked Wallace.

XXVI

THURLOW CASTLE

THERE were "towers and top-pieces and moats and things"—hundreds of little spirelike points on the turrets and four great towers springing from the ground. It was not a large castle, but it had all the qualities of the old-time castle—inside and out—except that it was open to sunshine and the world; little slits of windows, made for sending arrows down upon an approaching foe, had been deepened and broadened; and the sun poured in, through four-foot thickness, into the great rooms; outside, the moat had been drained and wall-flowers and roses grew there, and forget-me-nots and arabis and feathery-plumed asters reaching against the walls.

Mother walked around the moat twice a day—once with Anthony leaning on her stout arm, and once with the Lord. She had become quite well acquainted with Lord Raleigh; she gave

him advice about rheumatism and told him what John did when he was a baby. The white cap reached barely to his Lordship's shoulder, and the stately head had to bend a little.

Anthony, looking down from his window, smiled to see them; he could feel Mother's soul standing tip-toe, and Lord Raleigh's reaching to it, trying courteously to understand this brusque, rushing little woman in her cap. Anthony understood and loved them both. . . . He had been resting since he came, resting in the easy chair in the window and in the canopied bed at night—but resting, most of all, in the Castle, its thick walls and deep-freighted past. Roots that all his life had lain too close to the surface, struck deep in the subtle, invisible soil and nourished him. Sometimes, lying in the great bed at night, with the firelight flickering on the tapestries on the wall, he wondered how life would have looked if he had been born in the canopied bed—instead of in the little ten-by-twelve room in the New England country parsonage. . . . He could not fancy, somehow, that he should

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have felt very different. It would have been the same Anthony Wickham, loving his friends, shrinking if he saw a dog struck in the street—men are not different. It would have been pleasant, lying, looking at the firelight on thick walls, to know that one's ancestors had built them—and that the armour in the great hall below had been theirs, and the pictures and tapestries. . . . Anthony reached out a thin hand and stroked the colours beside him. It would have been pleasant to think that one's great-great-grandmother had wrought that monstrous tropical bird over there on the wall and had fashioned the colours, so steadfast and clear and soft and full of gentle thoughts. . . . He had lain looking at them many nights, in the firelight, watching by day from his chair by the window—the colours seemed to have become a part of him. . . . He drifted into the past—far back where the colours shaped themselves and grew under light, thin fingers. Hand-work—all the Castle—from the turrets to the low-groined arches in the lowest hall—made be-

cause some one loved it. And suddenly Anthony saw against the western sky of New York steel-ribbed frames thrusting themselves up—and heard the clang of steel strike on steel—building to the sky for a young gigantic race. The hand stroking the tapestry seemed very worn and thin. . . . But something was in it—of that other race across the sea—the gods that were building to their own downfall—that the greater ones may come—children of men once more. . . . And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls, playing in the streets thereof. . . . Anthony dozed in his chair in the wide window and waked, and down below, along the terrace-moat, the two figures walked—the little flying white cap, and the stately, courteous figure bending to it.

As Anthony recovered strength he became conscious that something had happened to him—out of the roar of London streets or the thickness of the castle walls or the cleansing touch of the fever, something had come . . . thoughts that on the shoemaker's bench had only moved before

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him vaguely, grew clear; lying in the great chair out on the terrace, he watched them shape themselves—his mind played with them and rose and travelled a little—out to the world . . . he watched the great clouds float over the castle and the sunshine playing on vines that climbed the trellises and on the little blue and white flowers along the edge of the walks—he floated with the clouds and played, as the sunshine played, upon the trellises and the blue and white flowers. . . . But when he tried to put his thoughts into words they would not always come—out of the clouds and the little flowers along the edge of the path.

Mother watched him anxiously—she waylaid Lord Raleigh in the garden—“I’m bothered about Anthony!”

His Lordship stopped in the rose-path—“I thought he was doing very well—?” he said gravely.

“He’s *doing* all right,” said Mother—“but he *talks* queer. . . . I can’t understand—half the time—what he means!”

"That's what makes him interesting, isn't it—!" said Lord Raleigh.

"It doesn't interest me—not to understand a single word, hardly, sometimes. . . . He's talking this morning about hippopotamuses and flying machines." She looked at him sternly over her glasses.

His Lordship laughed out. "I must go and hear him," he said.

Mother stood looking after the stately back—the wrinkles in her face gathered themselves in little knots and blinked. . . . It was all very well to be a Lord and laugh——

His Lordship turned and saw her, and came back. "You must not be anxious." He reached out a hand to her. "I did not understand that you were really worried—" his tone was full of sympathy—even with the little laugh underneath it—and Mother's eyes winked hard.

"I don't mind his being queer," she said. "He's always been *queer*, more or less—but he's never been so happy about being queer, before. It's kind of—of—idiotic!"

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She looked at him appealingly.

But he only laughed out again and patted her hand. "Don't worry about your husband—He has more sense with half his wits than I have with all mine!"

"Yes—I know *that!*" said Mother. But she said it only to the roses and the sun-dial sleeping in the light. His Lordship was gone already, half-way down the path that led to the terrace.

He found Anthony watching a little black-and-red lady-bug crawling on his hand. Anthony nodded to the hand—"She's taking quite a journey," he said—"under her red wings!"

"Yes." The man sat down in the chair opposite and they watched the lady-bug take her airing along the narrow, blue-veined path—that led to nowhere. When she came to the knuckle she paused, sending out feelers, and waited a minute, gathering herself, and lifted her wings and flew away. . . . Anthony watched her. . . . "I've been thinking about locomotion," he said.

Lord Raleigh smiled—"And flying machines, I suppose?"

"Yes—machines of every kind—they've bothered me—a long time. . . . I don't really like them—you know!" He looked at him with the little whimsical smile that seemed a part of his face—like the nose, or the near-sighted glasses.

"Of course you don't like machines—nobody likes them—that has any sense—" said the Lord.

"I'd like to think that," said Anthony. "I used to believe it—half-way—when I was making shoes. You see, I *knew* I could make a better pair of shoes than a machine could make—a pair that would feel better—wear better . . . but this morning I see I'm wrong about it—"

The other did not speak—he only watched the shoemaker with curious, half-amused, affectionate eyes.

"I got to thinking about it looking at your castle—and wondering why we can't make anything like it now. . . . Yes—I know—we do make houses bigger than your castle—" An-

thony's hand moved a little toward it and loved it.

The Earl looked up at the house his ancestors had built. . . . He would not have cared to tell every one how he felt about his castle . . . the very bones of his body were knit in it—and the thoughts of his heart—"It's alive, you know." He said the words softly—half to himself.

Anthony nodded—"That's what it said to me, this morning. . . . It's eternal—your castle. Sometimes I've felt I'd made a pair of shoes that were eternal—one or two pair——"

They sat silent—the lady-bug had lighted on a green leaf and crawled underneath and was resting after her flight. . . . "That's the way I came to see it," said Anthony. "I've been feeling it all the time I've been here in the castle. Somebody must have loved it—up into the air there——"

They both looked up to the little spirelike turrets . . . they sprang piercingly against the blue sky. . . . "Somebody must have loved it," said Anthony—"and all the castles—and the

cathedrals—everywhere—somebody loved 'em—till they grew that way!"

The Earl had shifted his position a little, and was staring before him.

"They make kind of a body for the Spirit," said Anthony, "—all the cathedrals and castles everywhere. I seem to see they're a kind of body. And then I got to thinking about its hippopotamus body. Mother wouldn't let me tell her about that—" He smiled a little. "She went to call you about that time, I think?"

"Yes."

"I didn't make it very clear, I guess. . . . I was thinking how the Spirit must 'a' loved 'em sometime—the way it loved your castle—loved to feel 'em breathe and walk around and lie down—with their queer, leathery old necks. It seems queer—not to throw 'em away when they're done with——"

"I've thought about that—a hundred times——" said the Earl.

Anthony nodded. "I knew you had thought of it very likely; that's why it's easy to talk to

you. Mother's never thought much about it, I guess. I always used to be pegging away on it—wondering about it—asking Samuel what *he* thought——”

“What did he say?”

Anthony's little smile crept about the words. “He said they were hippopotamuses—and that was all there was to it. One day he got a little pestered with me for keeping at it, and he said they had just as good a right to be hippopotamuses as he and I had to be a shoemaker . . . and that set me thinking. I thought a good while on it. . . . I see it clearer now—Everything that's living is just the Spirit, speaking out, breathing-like. . . . It has to make new bodies all the while—ships—cathedrals—men and puppies and goats—it can't find any shape to suit—exactly. It just says all it can in one body and then it moves on . . . but it doesn't throw the old one away . . . it keeps it—kind of a book, like—for us to read. . . . And that's the way I got to thinking about flying machines and making shoes by machinery, in-

stead of good old hand-made ones. . . . The Spirit is living in the machines now, I guess, building a kind of body for itself—not so solid as the earth—but it’s alive all through—saying things all the time. . . . I just seemed to hear all the machines talking around the world . . . there’s something they are saying—” He leaned forward, “I must listen to it. . . .”

The Earl got up and walked away. He came back slowly—along the rose-path, under the swaying, shimmering vines. He paused by Anthony’s chair—and laid a hand, half-affectionately, on his shoulder. . . . “They’re saying we are done with—the cathedrals and the castle and me—” He motioned toward the beautiful silent towers and the little turrets. “We’re done with,” he said softly—

Anthony looked up to him and smiled a little. . . . “Perhaps you’re a kind of illuminated books—the hand-made kind you were showing me yesterday, you know—that the Spirit has said things in. . . .”

XXVII

JOHN ARRIVES

THE owner of Thurlow Castle might not object to figuring as a fine old twentieth century missal; but he did not, as yet, feel called upon to admire the machines that were to replace him and his kind. . . . Machines were all very well in their way; there were three cars in the garage, all of the newest type—the great touring car, a model limousine and the convenient little runabout. Lord Raleigh used them freely and they had practically supplanted the stables. He believed in using machines, and in keeping them in their proper place. Possibly, at the back of his mind, there was a little disturbing sense that he might not always be able to keep them in what he considered their proper place——

How much of this was in his mind as he greeted John Wickham, it would not be easy to say. Mother and Nurse Timberlake had gone

to the station to meet him, and as the car swept up the curve of the drive, the figure of a man seated by Mother, on the back seat, was outlined with sharp distinctness against the old trees. The motionless figure seemed a part of the machine, strong, implacable—and moving with swift, on-rushing power.

Lord Raleigh and Anthony, sitting on the terrace, watched the car approach, and as it drew up in front of the steps, the master of the castle went forward to meet it.

John Wickham stepped out and the two men stood looking at each other a minute over their clasped hands; then they stepped apart—and the ocean swept in between. . . . For the first time the Lord of Thurlow had encountered face to face the force that would some day supplant him and his kind. He felt it, vaguely, as he turned away. They would be left—he and his castle—beautiful old missals, for this younger man of iron and steel to pore over in his leisure hours. It flitted through his mind, half-humorously, as he turned and led the way to the ter-

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race. But when the young man stooped to his father and kissed him, the other had a sense of something strong and tender—something beautiful, that he had missed. . . . The young American was no longer a successful man of business, half-defiant in his attitude toward the owner of the castle; there was a kind of humbleness about him and the Earl lingered a second before he turned away—down the rose-path—and left them.

Mother fussed at chairs, placing one for Nurse Timberlake and one for John—quite near by. But the Nurse slipped away—she must go and look after Anthony's egg-nog, and presently Mother went to take off her bonnet.

John had not seen the cap—she would surprise John! When she returned she stood meekly with folded hands, waiting. He looked up—and jumped up—and laughed.

"I *say*, Mother!" He turned her around, on her pivot, and looked at her. "It's all right!" he pronounced.

Mother smiled serenely. "Wally picked it out," she said.

"I'm a little jealous of Wally, you know," replied John.

"Everybody's jealous of Wally," said Anthony from his chair. "Mother can't stir without Wally——"

"I came here without him," said Mother triumphantly.

"But you would have liked him to come——"

"Well—he would have enjoyed it. . . . And he would have been company for me—when you and the Lord get to talking. They're always talking!" she said with fine scorn.

"But you have Nurse Timberlake for company," said Anthony.

"Yes-s—I *have* had her."

"You speak as if you never would again," said John, laughing.

"I don't expect to see so much of her as I have," said Mother discreetly.

Then Nurse appeared with the egg-nog and

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Mother took it from her— “You can show John around the place a little, before we have tea,” she said. “I’ll feed Father this—” And her delighted eyes followed them as they walked away. There was something of the same quick decisiveness in the two figures.

“They look nice together, don’t they?” said Mother—

Anthony smiled a little. “You take match-making hard, Mother—I shouldn’t want you to marry me off.”

“You’re married already—to me!” said Mother. “*They* won’t need much helping—” she nodded toward the receding figures. Then she looked again. “The Lord’s with them!” she said. “Here—drink this. . . .”

Anthony took it, smiling. “*He* won’t interfere with your plans—Mother—He’s a philosopher.”

“He don’t like John!” said Mother promptly.

“How did you find that out?”

“I saw it—the first thing—when they shook hands. They acted real foolish—both of

them! . . . There! they're coming back!—Well—it's just as well, they couldn't say much with him around—he always does the talking——”

“Why, Mother!”

“Well—what did he want to go walking off in that direction for—when he had the whole grounds to walk in—hundreds of acres of ground!”

But when Lord Raleigh approached, with the destined pair, Mother beamed upon him, and upon them. She had the faith of a child that things would come right—the kind of faith that sometimes makes them come right, in spite of everything that hinders.

It did not need a great deal of faith to see, as the days went by, that John and Nurse Timberlake were good friends. They had a hundred likes and dislikes in common. “They don't either of them eat tripe!” announced Mother triumphantly.

“Are you going to marry them—on not liking tripe?” asked Anthony.

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"You can make all the fun you want to, Anthony. *You* know it makes a difference."

"Yes—it makes a difference," assented Anthony. He could not quite bring himself to tell Mother his little suspicion that not even the not liking tripe would cause John and Nurse Timberlake to fall hopelessly and irrevocably in love. And who was he after all, to pretend to understand the vagaries of love. . . . It was far more likely that Mother with her instincts was right.

So Mother laid her little snares and watched happily when the unsuspecting pair walked into them; and turned her head circumspectly not to see too much.

There were days when she regarded herself sternly in the light of a wicked old matchmaker. She had been a little troubled since she learned that Nurse Timberlake was not a poor young woman, depending on Anthony's frailties for support.

The Nurse had told her one evening at dusk, standing in the upper window, looking down on

the park. . . . "It is a dear, old place!" she had said. "I get fonder of it every year, I think."

"You've been here a good many times?" said Mother.

Nurse Timberlake turned to her and smiled a little. "I was born here," she said.

"You were—born *here*," said Mother. "I thought—you were—a nurse——!"

"A nurse has to be born, you know," she was smiling again. "I think I rather like it—going about in cap and apron—where I used to play and do all sorts of things. . . . There were only two of us—sister and I. We played hide and seek here in the hall after dark—it was very dark, I remember—not all lighted up as Cousin Thurlow has it now—" She moved her hand at the long, lighted corridor beyond.

"I am very fond of the place. . . . I am glad it will be mine, some day," she added softly.

Mother stared—a little bewildered. "Did you say it was yours?" she said.

"It will be—I suppose, some day. Polly likes the town house better. She will take that. We are next of kin—sister and I."

"It seems queer," said Mother, "for him to let you go out nursing. But I suppose it's English—?" she sighed a little—at the difficulty of understanding.

"Yes—it's English—perhaps. But it's more that we wanted to do it. When I went into training, we thought Cousin Thurlow would marry. . . ."

"You mean if he had married, you wouldn't 'a' had—" Mother groped at it.

"Not the Castle certainly," said the girl. "A small allowance, perhaps—just enough to live on. I wanted to be independent—and so did Polly. She does miniatures—"

"Pictures?" said Mother.

"Small ones—yes—portraits. She does beautiful work."

"It's all topsy-turvy!" said Mother. "And it doesn't seem right—either you have a lot—"

she swept her hand toward the dusky park—"or else you don't have anything at all!"

"That's it!" The nurse smiled on her.

"It's English," said Mother.

"Yes—it's English." She spoke with a kind of quiet pride—and moved down the hall. "Come, and see the ancestors," she said. "They light up best at night."

And Mother followed the cap and apron down the hall, groping at the topsy-turvydom that upset all her ideas. Suddenly she stopped—"You will be a Lady!" she said swiftly.

"What is it?" Nurse turned back a little. "Oh—no—the title lapses with Cousin Thurlow. No, I shall be plain Miss Timberlake always."

"I don't believe you will!" said Mother stoutly.

But in her heart she had a little, sinking sense that Nurse Timberlake might be right. The situation was—English. She moved a little less happily on her matchmaking path. . . . Her son was good enough for any girl—good enough

even for Miss Alice Timberlake, of Thurlow; but Miss Timberlake would be a rich woman sometime, and Mother could not scheme for a rich wife for John.

She had not the comfort of knowing that long before Nurse Timberlake came into possession of Thurlow Castle, her son might be able to buy up the castle and all it contained—two castles—three if it pleased him. Castles, old masters and tapestries—all to be swept into Johnnie's capacious American apron if it pleased him. But to Mother he was only her boy—hardly able to look after his socks and certainly not to be trusted to pick out a wife.

She confided her troubles to Anthony—or tried to. "It all belongs to her, Anthony!" she said, "to Nurse Timberlake——"

"What belongs—?" asked Anthony. He was lying back in his chair, looking up at the top of the Castle and the great trees beyond it. "What is it you say belongs to Nurse Timberlake?" he said.

"All of this—everything!" Mother waved

her hand—"the castle and the grounds—she owns everything really."

"So do I," said Anthony dreamily.

Mother looked at him anxiously. She hoped it wasn't going to be one of Anthony's queer mornings—she needed some one to confide in—and there was no one like Anthony—if only he would be sensible.

"What I mean is—" said Mother, "she told me last night—she will own everything here—when the Lord dies. . . . You understand me, Anthony?"

"Yes, I understand, Mother. . . . I own it now in essence—myself. It is a wonderful old place to own!"

So Mother gave it up. Fate must do what it could. She settled down to her work. John and Nurse Timberlake had gone for a walk. A great many things could happen in a walk. It was when she and Anthony went for a walk that he had spoken. . . . She could remember how blue the sky was, with the great white clouds sailing over—there had been a rain the night be-

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fore, and everything smelled sweet! "Do you remember, Anthony, the walk we took up by Dolman's Hill?"

"Yes—I remember," said Anthony, "what about it?"

"Nothing," said Mother softly, "I only wondered if you remembered——"

Anthony looked at her and smiled—just as he had smiled that day.

And John came out to them on the terrace and said he must get back to town to-morrow. Business had come up that he must be there to look after.

XXVIII

ANTHONY'S THOUGHTS

THE shoemaker and the Earl were in the garden together. John had gone back to town. Mother and Nurse Timberlake were engaged in some mysterious rite of dressmaking; they had become invisible to mere man.

Anthony had been in the garden all the morning, walking about a little, reading and thinking. Lord Raleigh had returned from his drive around the estate and had come straight to the terrace; they had sat ever since talking, watching the clouds and the rooks overhead and the great rooks' nests in the trees—The little shadows shifted themselves silently on the grass and the gravel walk and swayed hurriedly when the wind blew the branches about. . . . They had been talking of a dozen things—turning them slowly about—and they sat silent in the little wind that came across the garden—it

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shook soft scents from the flowers and scattered them. Over against the low yew hedge, a single pair of tulips held their little, yellow, shining globes against the dark green of the yew. "That is a stray," said the Earl. He looked at the quaint stiffness of the hedge and the yellow flower growing against it. . . . "It is far more beautiful than anything that Hodges planted—" he said, "it seems to belong there, by the hedge, growing that way, doesn't it?"

Anthony's eyes rested on it. "I think they found each other out," he said.

"You do—?" The Earl laughed quietly. "The hedge said to the tulip, I suppose, 'Come over here, Miss Flower, I shall be very becoming to you!' . . . Or perhaps you think the tulip moved the hedge a rod or two—?"

Anthony smiled. . . . "You say it because you think it is ridiculous," he said quietly.

"I did the best for them I could—said the best thing I could," assented the Earl.

"I think it may be true," said the shoemaker.

The other's quizzical smile rested on him.



Mother, from her model-stand, looked down on them



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"And perhaps you think *you* called *me*—on Blackfriars Bridge!"

"Something like that," said Anthony. "The right flowers grow together, if we let them, and trees and bushes—they don't make mistakes, do they——"

"There *is* a kind of choice——" said the Earl thoughtfully. "But you're not going to make me believe that the whole universe goes on screaming out and calling—tumbling over itself, to get to the right place—like the taxis in the Strand."

"No—not exactly——" said Anthony smiling, "but I was reading while you were away this morning——" He touched the book on the chair beside him. "I was reading how everything solid—every bit of marble and flesh and bone and rock—is all whirling round inside; and the harder it seems to be—the faster it whirls."

"Yes—I know. . . . They used to say it took faith to believe in religion. Nowadays it takes more faith to believe the scientists—!"

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He looked at Anthony with the little twinkling smile. "You believe that, I suppose—about the things whirling around inside?"

"Yes—don't you?"

"Yes. . . . What I want to know is—where it's all whirling to?"

"You'll be there to see," said Anthony quietly.

"You think so—?" The Earl turned and stared across at the tulips. "You think—so?" he said slowly. "It doesn't seem quite likely, you know."

"No—but it's true."

"You've had a message, I suppose—special wireless!"

Anthony ignored the little gentle irony of the words. "I've seen it—yes. . . . I remembered this morning a yellow rose-bush that used to grow in the door-yard at home when I was a boy. I hadn't thought of it for years. I didn't know I remembered it—but all of a sudden I saw it, clear as light—and smelled the roses and saw myself standing by it, with my mother—" He

sat looking before him as if he saw it still in a kind of dream.

The other stirred a little. "It's pretty—but it doesn't prove anything. . . . You smelled the roses over there—" His hand moved toward the rose-path. "You think of a yellow rose and of your Mother—and you tell me I'm immortal. . . . I don't even know that I want to be," he added thoughtfully. "I've *had* my life——"

"That's what I thought about the yellow-rose," said Anthony. "It died long ago. But it was alive—this morning—in me; and I am alive in Someone. He won't forget—a thousand years—He will remember, I think."

The Earl looked at him, at the gentle, thoughtful face and thin hands. He got up and walked away a little, and came back. "It doesn't prove anything," he said.

"Doesn't it?" Anthony smiled. "Things don't have to be proved—if you see them."

The other had seated himself. "So you think you will live—as an experience of the great

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Soul, you will live forever—that's fixed. . . . And it just goes on and on—more men, more roses, more experience—world without end. I don't see it getting anywhere. . . . Evolution—yes. . . . It stopped at men—You'll never get anything beyond men—on this earth. I'm not interested in Mars. Evolution on this earth is done with."

"You got a wireless, I suppose, when it stopped?" said Anthony quietly.

The other looked at him and smiled. "I haven't *seen* any great change—not since I was a boy. We're just about the same as the Pharaohs were—grim old kings of dust—just about the same."

"They didn't whirl around inside," said Anthony—"the Pharaohs didn't."

"Don't you think so?—modern touch, perhaps—whirling—inside and out—" He stared a minute and stopped. "There *may* be something in it," he said softly. . . . "But you won't get beyond Men!"

"Perhaps we don't need to," said Anthony.

ANTHONY'S THOUGHTS 235

"Suppose men get beyond themselves—Do things they didn't know they could."

The other was looking at him. "Such as—flying?" he asked.

Anthony shook his head. "They've done that. It isn't so very different from motoring—only in the air, instead of on the ground. It is something different I mean——"

"Something nobody has thought of yet?" suggested Lord Raleigh with his little quizzical smile.

"Yes. . . . Something like this—" The shoemaker leaned forward, speaking as if the things he spoke went whirling before him. . . . "It's as if we had a great Power in us that no one has touched. We don't know of it—any more than we knew that solid things were whirling all about—but some day some one will find it—lay his hand on it—and there will be men who can do what they will—walk upon the water, ride upon the wind. . . . You will see—you will not need a flying machine when you can get your hand on that Power. . . ." The

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shoemaker's thin hand came together suddenly in tight grip—he blinked a little—and laughed softly. . . . “I must have been talking great nonsense,” he said.

“Pretty bad,” said the other. He was looking across at him with keen, quiet eyes that shone a little. “Pretty bad—you're partly froth and partly grit, Anthony.”

“I'm glad Mother didn't hear it,” said Anthony. “It bothers Mother—to hear me talking nonsense, like that!”

XXIX

MOTHER'S OPINIONS

"Does it set all right in the back?" asked Mother anxiously.

She stood in front of the long mirror in the dressing-room, craning her neck a little to get a good view of the plump back. Nurse Timberlake, on a chair beside her, turned her slowly about, looking at her critically and adjusting folds. The maid on the floor, with a mouthful of pins, pinned skilfully and moved along on her knees, looking up now and then at the result and pinning on.

Nurse Timberlake nodded approval. "It's going to look just right!" she said.

Mother drew a sigh of relief. "I've always wanted a one-piece dress—ever since they came in. The dressmaker at home said I didn't have the figure for it."

"Your figure's all right," said Nurse Timber-

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lake. "Pin it up a little higher on this side, Amelia. Yes, there—that's it," she put her head back and surveyed it.

"I've always worn a basque," said Mother—she was still craning a little.

Nurse Timberlake made no reply. It was Mother's "basque" that had precipitated the pins and folds—Mother's basque was a short garment—very wide in the shoulders, tight in the waist, and having lines that tried the figure.

Mother looked again at her back in the mirror, and smoothed the front a little. "It's going to look real good, I guess—I wish Wally could see it!"

"He *will* see it—won't he—when we go back—?" The nurse spoke absently; she was still shifting the folds a little—"Put a pin here, Amelia. Yes—that's better. . . . See how you like that, Mrs. Wickham——"

Mother walked slowly back and forth in front of the mirror and looked at herself; the maid, on her knees, wore an air of distrustful approval and Nurse Timberlake studied the effect—"A

little more on this side, Amelia—don't you think so—yes."

The maid bent again to her pins. She had been assigned to Mother the day they arrived, but this was the first thing she had been allowed to do. Mother had stoutly resisted all offers to unpack trunks, or lay out her clothes for dinner or help her dress. "I'm used to doing for myself," she said. "It bothers me to have anybody around." So the maid had withdrawn in respectful, disapproving silence.

It was Nurse Timberlake's idea, that she could be utilised for dressmaking. "Why not let her make you a new frock?" she had said. "She is really very good at that sort of thing. You could send into town for some stuff."

"I've got three dresses now—besides my everyday one," said Mother. "I don't know what I should do with any more——"

"She might alter these a little then," said Nurse Timberlake. "Fashions change so, you know——"

"Sleeves?" asked Mother anxiously.

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"Yes—and backs."

"Well—I don't mind her trying. You don't think she would spoil them?"

"She's very good," said Nurse discreetly. "Just let her try one."

So Mother stood obediently in front of the mirror, and turned when she was told to, and walked off a little way, and came back, and stood—"a little more to the right"—and the maid and Nurse Timberlake evolved the work of art.

Somewhere in the course of events a bolt of soft, black, lacy stuff had made its appearance. "Some that I had before I went into training," said Nurse. "I shouldn't ever wear it now. We need something of the sort—for these lines here." She threw a fold of it over Mother's shoulder and draped it at the back.

"Just what it needed," said Amelia on her knees, pinning swiftly and looking up.

"It makes a difference, doesn't it—here take the rest of it—that way—yes—that's right!"

The two artists stood back to survey the result.

"You don't think it makes me look too squatty, do you?" said Mother.

"Not a bit. Here—put on your cap—there now look at yourself!"

Mother looked and smiled, in soft, little wrinkles, and turned herself. "I do wish Wallace could see it," she said. "Wallace has good taste."

Nurse Timberlake smiled a little. "He wears æsthetic socks," she admitted.

"They're always the same colour as his neckties—did you ever notice?"

"Yes—I've noticed. . . . You might take that out now, Amelia, and hem the edge."

Amelia gathered up a lacy wing and departed.

Mother stood in front of the mirror, still turning; but she was not looking at herself—her face had grown thoughtful. "I don't know as I think Wally has any better taste than John has—" she said slowly.

Nurse Timberlake's face wrinkled a little. "Your son does not care about his clothes—not as Mr. Tilton does."

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"That's it," said Mother. "I was trying to think how it was—John never did care . . . even as a *little* boy he didn't seem to care about such things—and I had to *make* him wash his face and hands."

Nurse Timberlake's smile laughed out. "I don't doubt it!" She nodded to the gown—"You might take it off now, and we'll give it to Amelia to work on."

"I can hem this piece myself," said Mother, gathering up a soft bit.

"Yes—well—if you like . . . she's glad to have it to do for you, you know."

"I like to do it," said Mother. "I feel better to have something going through my hands. I feel foolish—just to sit down with 'em folded."

"I thought we would go out on the terrace. Cousin Thurlow asked me to read——"

"I shall take it out there," said Mother. "I can listen and sew, too."

But when they reached the terrace the chairs under the tree were pushed about and empty.

In the distance through the trees two figures paced slowly.

"They'll be back soon," said Nurse, "we'll wait——"

They sat under the big tree, the morning light about them falling on the garden and terrace and on the table littered with books and papers and the half-scattered pouch of tobacco and short briar-wood pipe. The nurse tidied the table a little.

Mother watched her a minute. Then she unfolded her work. "John likes pretty things, though——" she continued. "He likes them on other people. He'll know if it looks good——" she held up her work and looked at it.

Nurse Timberlake sat down, leaning forward a little, her hands swinging loosely like a young boy. Her face had a fresh, quizzical look. "I can tell you who has better taste even than—— John."

"Who is it?" said Mother looking up—— startled.

"Mr. Wickham."

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"Anthony!" Mother let fall her work and gazed in the distance where the two figures paced behind the leafy-branching trees. . . . "Anthony doesn't know, half the time, what folks have on," she said. "Or, anyway, he never says anything——"

"I'd rather know what he thinks about things—most things—than almost any one I know——" said Nurse.

Mother pricked her needle idly through her dress. "We've never depended much on Anthony, not for anything real sensible," she said.

Nurse smiled. "You'd call clothes sensible—how they look—wouldn't you?"

"Oh, yes——" said Mother. "That takes sense—of course."

"He could tell you," said Nurse, "—if he looked. He doesn't always look. He's thinking about other things."

"He's dreadful absent-minded!" assented Mother.

"I've heard him and Cousin Thurlow talking—about the Castle—and he said things about it

that modern critics are just beginning to find out—which parts are good and which are bad—he seems to know by instinct—and he'd never seen a castle before. Cousin Thurlow says it's because he looks at things just the way a child would—and doesn't pretend."

"I've always said he was just like a child," said Mother. "He's a dreadful trial that way sometimes—he doesn't seem to use good judgment!"

"I am afraid he doesn't." The nurse laughed softly. "You know people are beginning to say now that good judgment isn't worth very much?"

Mother looked at her—she settled her glasses firmly on her nose. "I don't know what *I'd* do without it. How are you going to *judge* a thing if you don't have judgment?" she asked severely. She looked over her glasses.

"Don't be cross about it!" said Nurse Timberlake, laughing. "I didn't invent it—I don't even pretend to understand it—altogether. But if I could get as near right as Mr. Wickham does,

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I wouldn't care whether my judgment was good or bad—I'd trust my instinct."

Mother said nothing. England was queer. London was queer. Anthony was queer. . . . But now, it seemed his queerness was all right. It was a topsy-turvy world, everything in it was queer. . . . She sewed on, drawing little fine black stitches through the lacy stuff, her mouth set tight.

When Anthony came up, she looked at him—as if she had never seen him before. It was the same quaint Anthony, with half-drooping shoulders and the little white lock rising from his forehead—the same Anthony she had always loved and taken care of and felt superior to. She looked down at his feet, "Did you put on your thicker socks?"

"Did I?" He looked down, a little guiltily. His face lighted—"I *did* put them on—didn't I? I thought perhaps I'd forgot."

Mother looked again—"You've got on one thick one—and one thin one," she said.

"So I have!" Anthony looked at them—he smiled, "I'd better go change 'em."

"It will do if you change one—" said Mother drily. Presently she looked up. "You saw what he'd done?"

"Yes," Nurse Timberlake was smiling.

"Used his instinct to put on his socks with!" said Mother. "I think a little judgment wouldn't 'a' hurt—enough to put on socks with."

XXX

THE RETURN TO THE TEMPLE

MOTHER, in soft, lacy, wing-like garments, ceased to walk solidly on both feet, and floated plumply about the castle. Sometimes Lord Raleigh, seeing her, smiled a little to himself at the picture—a gentle, courtly smile. There was something in Mother that kept him amused. He could not talk with her as he talked with Anthony; but her downrightness interested and kept him wondering a little. Through Mother he was studying a new type—the American woman before the culture-bacillus took possession of her. She beamed on him—narrow, keen, generous—perhaps the most essentially feminine woman in the world; beside her the English women whom he knew seemed fairly masculine—they walked with long, swinging step, free from the hip, and their processes were almost as free and direct as the stride. It was not difficult to follow them—

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one noted the direction and swung into pace with them and arrived, in due time, at the goal—not always in agreement with them—but always able to understand and answer back. If English women chose to smash windows up and down Regent Street in the holy cause of votes for women, the average Englishman might protest and grumble, but he understood; he could retort by breaking into rooms and ragging them thoroughly—throwing furniture about, emptying bureau drawers and wardrobes and strewing the contents about the room; he knew how the suffragette would feel when she entered and beheld the wreckage; and *she* knew that *he* knew that *she* knew. It was all a great family party—with exchange of amenities. You knew where to find a woman—in England. She might differ with you, she might oppose you—or flirt with you; but she was a comprehensible being.

Not so Mother. She marched with you on the path of logic—looking up at you with puzzled, meek eyes, ready at any time to be convinced by

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superior remarks; and then suddenly, with a little bewildered flourish, she had left you standing—with your feet planted firmly on facts, gazing after her as she floated up; she circled like an air-ship—a balloon—above your astonished head, and took flight, coming down in some new place—quite an illogical place, perhaps, but—the more you blinked and looked—in exactly the spot she meant! Anthony had lived with her forty years.

It might be, Lord Raleigh fancied, that Anthony's mind had gained something from its forty years experience of this round, flitting surety of flight. Mother, he could surmise, had not altered by a hair's breadth. But no mere masculine mind could stand untouched by Mother's flights. Perhaps the American man—with his keen, intuitive business sense—owed more than he guessed, to small round women in bonnets—coming down in unexpected places. One cannot stand forever, staring, bewildered—he would essay little flights of his

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own, and discover, after the first gasping breath, that it "worked."

Something like this flitted through his Lordship's mind as he watched Mother or walked with her on the terrace. She told him her bewilderments and laid difficulties before him. She consulted him about Anthony, and asked advice, and looked up to him meekly—but always with the little impending sense of flight, that kept things moving on. Sometimes Nurse Timberlake, watching them together, smiled—they were two types that might not have met for a thousand years, that could never have met perhaps except by Anthony Wickham gently understanding them both.

About Anthony she had no doubts. If there were another Anthony Wickham in the world—young or old—she would marry him to-morrow! But there were no men like Anthony—they were all old and grown-up—even the young men were old . . . no, she should never marry—probably not.

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They were going back to town next week. Anthony was recovered. The castle would be full of other guests—some of them coming before they left—and Mother was anxious to get back to “John.” . . . Nurse Timberlake, walking in the garden, picked a rose, as she thought of Mother and her John, and smiled at it. . . . They would travel up to London together; and she would leave them and go back to her ragged children. It had been a long vacation—first in the Temple and then here at Thurlow. She was devoted to every stone of the old place; she looked up at the little pointed turrets, and loved them. . . . She was free to come back any time—she knew that Cousin Thurlow would give her welcome—but she must go back to work. She had been resting too long—one could not call taking care of Anthony Wickham work. She wondered what Tony Wasson was doing—she must try to get the children off for a holiday. Perhaps Cousin Thurlow could tell her of some one on the estate—who could—take them. . . . She walked with bent head, think-

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ing of her children—Tony Wasson's children—the rose in her fingers swinging a little, as she walked, and her long, free skirts swishing against the arabis in the borders and waking sweet scents.

John met them at the station—looking after Anthony with quiet care and placing Mother in the taxi beside him, before he turned to insist that Nurse Timberlake should drive with them. . . .

“If you cannot stay at the Temple, I'll take you on to your place later.”

But she was firm. “I must get back to my people,” she said. She motioned to a taxi and it turned toward the curb. “Good-bye—I shall come to see you—yes. Take good care of him.” She nodded and was gone.

John replaced his hat and got into the cab—
“You can go see her to-morrow,” said Mother.

He stared at her a little, and smiled. “I can get along a day or two, I think.” He was

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laughing now. "It's pretty good to get you and Father back—How is he?" he had turned to him.

"I'm well—quite well again—" He was leaning forward a little, looking at the pushing, hurrying mass surging on either side of the taxi. . . .

Mother's glance followed it—"It seems kind o' good to get back—" she said, with a little gesture of surprise.

He turned and smiled at her. "You like it—as well as I do, Mother!"

"I hope not," she said sternly.

But she bent forward again and looked—"There is something . . .!"

"There certainly is," laughed John. "I've been here three weeks now, and I'm just about as drunk with it as I was the first day I came——"

"John Wickham!"

"Figuratively drunk, Mother! You seem to forget I've had Wallace."

"How is Wally?" asked Mother quickly.

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"Fine!" said John. He and Anthony exchanged a look. "He's gained ten pounds, I'll warrant, since you've been gone——"

"It wouldn't do for Wally to get *too* fat!" said Mother thoughtfully. "I've got three new dresses——"

"Indeed!" said John—he looked down at her mockingly, and Anthony, watching them with quiet eyes, smiled at the little play between them.

They would have a real vacation now—and see something of the boy. It was years since they had really seen him. Even in college, there had always been work planned for vacations—first chain-carrying and later more responsible work. The boy had always done his share—he had worked hard—and made his way. . . . Wallace had told them—more than they had known before—how the Management trusted him. To Anthony, Wallace had confided that John would some day be a rich man. "They don't stop when once they begin—with a man like John," Wallace had said. "It's the top or nothing!"

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“He’ll have enough to take care of Mother then if anything—should happen to me,” said Anthony, “I wouldn’t want Mother worried.”

Wallace laughed a little—and he laid his hand affectionately on Anthony’s arm. “If anything should happen to you, Mr. Wickham, John could buy up your shoeshop—and the whole town of Bolton—twice over! . . . You don’t quite understand what it means—to be in with the Steel Trust.”

“I don’t suppose I do,” said Anthony. “I only didn’t want Mother worried.”

XXXI

A CALL ON NURSE TIMBERLAKE

WALLACE's fingers drummed a little on the arm of his chair. "I haven't seen much of John—since you came back," he said thoughtfully.

"You have kind o' missed each other," said Mother.

"I've been here every day," remarked Wallace.

"So you have," said Mother. "—Have another piece of pie, Wally; you've only had one piece——"

So Wally took his pie—and his face lighted a little; he chewed it slowly and thoughtfully.

"John's a good deal interested in something Nurse Timberlake's getting up," said Mother, "—kind of a show for the children."

"Where is it going to be?" asked Wallace.

"Down there somewheres—where she lives—John knows."

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Wallace glanced up. "Are you going to it?"

"Yes—we thought we'd all go. You can go along with us if you want to," she said graciously.

"I'll think about it," said Wallace. "Put on your bonnet and let's go for a walk."

Mother looked a little guilty. "I ought to do my dishes first—?"

"Do them when you get back," said Wallace. "The sun won't last much longer."

Mother looked again at her dishes—"Where were you thinking of going?" she asked slowly.

"Oh, anywhere—Green Park, Hyde Park; just for a stroll, you know—come on!"

Mother's face grew more guilty. "I kind o' hoped you wouldn't want to go—to the Parks—not to-day," she said.

"Why not—? Don't we always go to the Parks?" asked Wallace. He looked at her a little puzzled.

"That's what I meant!" said Mother.

"What—you—meant—?"

She nodded quickly. "I don't suppose you'll

understand how it is, Wally. But it seems to me, if I see another one of those green chairs, or flower-beds, or pieces of water with ducks on 'em, I shall go crazy!" said Mother.

He looked at her in astonishment. "I thought you liked it!" he said.

"Well—I *did* like it—just for a time or two. But now that I've kept on seeing it—and seeing it—I'm—— It gets on my nerves I guess!" She laughed a little and righted her glasses—and looked at him.

He returned the look—"I never dreamed you felt that way—about the *Parks!*" he said.

Mother's look of guilt deepened. "I know I hadn't ought to, Wally. . . . I can see folks like 'em—like to go there—other folks. I can see people walking up and down, liking it. They don't *look* happy exactly, but I can see they think they're enjoying it—the way they sit in the chairs and walk on the walks and drive round. . . . Why, nights after I get to bed, I shut my eyes and see 'em, Wally—driving and sitting—and those miles of green chairs—They

just go round and round. . . . I guess I'm not a round-and-round sort of person," she said meekly.

Wallace laughed out. "Have it your own way, Mother. I won't make you sit in a green chair if you don't want to."

Mother's face cleared. "Then I can do my dishes," she said. She began to tie on her apron.

Wallace looked at her sternly. "You're trying to get out of taking exercise. You take that right off and put on your bonnet; we'll go somewhere—somewhere else—where there aren't any green chairs."

Mother obeyed, beaming. . . . Anthony and John always let her do exactly as she pleased. Wallace seldom let her have her own way, and when he did he made her pay for it.

She tied on her bonnet with thoughtful fingers and smoothed her hair. "You hadn't thought *where* we'd go—had you?"

"I think we'll go and call on Miss Timberlake," said Wallace.

"That's a good idea, Wally!" said Mother.
"Perhaps we'll find John!"

"Perhaps," said Wallace briefly.

But when they had climbed the stairs to Nurse Timberlake's little apartment, they found her alone and another cup and plate across the table from her.

She sprang up to welcome them. "Come right in—I'll make fresh tea——"

"We've had tea," said Mother, "—and Wally's had his pie—two pieces."

Nurse Timberlake laughed out, "He ought to be in good humour then—sit down."

"We thought maybe we'd find John here," said Mother.

A quick flush had come into Nurse Timberlake's face—Wallace's eye happened to rest on it.

"He said he was coming," said Mother.

"He's been here—yes. But he had to go—in a minute." The nurse busied herself with the tea-things, pushing back the table and righting the room.

Wallace's eyes studied the rug.

"Wally wanted to come," said Mother, "and we thought we'd do it instead of the Parks. We've got a little tired of the Parks—there's so much grass in parks——"

Nurse Timberlake's face looked at her, smiling. "You didn't feel that way at Thurlow—about the garden, did you, and the grounds?"

"Castles are different from parks—all those people walking around," said Mother. "I can't explain how it is if you don't feel it that way——"

Wallace looked at her. "You're getting to be a snob, Mother," he said sternly, "—a regular, castle-visiting, tuft-hunting snob!"

"I don't know what I've got to snob about, Wally," said Mother meekly. . . . "The Castle is human-like—anybody can see it's different. But the Parks. . . . It's the way I've always thought I'd feel about heaven, maybe—" said Mother, a little guiltily—"kind of everybody-comfortable-and-standing-around-and-doing-nothing sort of place—I always knew I

shouldn't feel at home in heaven—not at first. I like home places.”

“You'll never be a socialist,” said Wallace.

“I don't want to be a socialist,” said Mother proudly.

“Nurse Timberlake's one. All the *niciest* people are socialists.”

Mother looked at him—“Not in Bolton,” she replied. “I never heard of any socialists in Bolton—folks are pretty comfortable there. . . . You ought to remember how it is in Bolton, Wally!”

“I can't truthfully say I do remember anything of the kind—when I was a boy; but things change, you know—the world moves——”

“The world doesn't move in Bolton,” said Mother firmly. There was a little rising colour in her face in defence of Bolton.

“Are you coming to my show?” asked Nurse Timberlake quietly; she was not going to let Mother be bothered like this——

Wallace glanced at her. “You think she minds,” he said, nodding toward Mother's

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flushed cheeks and the little flustered air—"She dotes on it—don't you, Mother?"

"Wally understands me," said Mother, "but he bothers me sometimes. . . . We're coming to the show—all of us," she said. "Wally's coming——"

"If you invite me," said Wallace.

"Oh, we invite every one—if you pay—Half-a-crown for the best seats, and three-pence for the gallery! It's for the work, you know."

"We'd better have the half-crown ones, Wally," said Mother significantly.

"Quite——" said Wallace, "you take subscriptions, too, I suppose——?"

"We're hoping for them—yes. Mr. Wickham has given one already."

"Anthony!" said Mother surprised.

"John!" said Nurse Timberlake, smiling.

"Oh—John—of course!" said Mother. She beamed on the room. "How much did John subscribe?" she asked.

"If it isn't a secret——" said Wallace.

"A hundred pounds," said Nurse.

"I'll put down two hundred," said Wallace.

Nurse Timberlake flushed a little—"It isn't necessary, a hundred is quite enough—" she said.

"You mean you refuse subscriptions—for your work." He was looking at her quietly.

"Sometimes—yes—" she hesitated a moment. "But give it—if you like. I really have no right to refuse anything—that people want to subscribe." She had recovered her poise, and was smiling at him.

"I think we'll call it two hundred," he said.

Mother looked at him—then she looked at Nurse Timberlake—and back at Wallace, a little puzzled light in her face—"I think you'd better give the same as John does, Wally—You both give a hundred—that's five hundred dollars, you know," she said meaningly.

"Very well," said Wallace. "Mother says I'm to make it a hundred." He looked at Nurse Timberlake.

"Thank you," she said. But the little colour had risen again in her face.

XXXII

MOTHER MAKES A DISCOVERY

It was a little cool in the evening and Mother had lighted a fire in the grate. Anthony sat by it, reading the paper. Wallace, having brought Mother safely home from Nurse Timberlake's, had had supper with them and gone away. John had not been in all day.

Mother was thinking about John as she finished the last of the dishes. There was still daylight enough to see by at six o'clock, and she had not lighted the gas—but it was growing a little dusky in the room. She looked over at Anthony—

“You'll spoil your eyes—” she said.

He laid down the paper and took off his glasses, rubbing his eyes a little. “It *is* getting dark. But the daylight lasts a long time now.” He glanced at the window in the west. The

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canary was hopping about in his cage, trying to settle down for the night.

Mother threw a cloth over the cage, "Go to sleep!" she said. She came over to the fire. Her face, where the light touched it, was very sober in its roundness.

Anthony looked at it, bending forward a little in the firelight to see. He sat up, polishing his glasses—"Anything the matter, Mother?" he asked.

"No," said Mother. She sat down opposite him, and got up and fussed at the fire, and sat down again plumply.

"You haven't noticed anything about—Wally—have you, Father?"

"About Wallace—!"

"Yes. . . . You hadn't noticed that he's—that he's getting fond—of—Nurse Timberlake!"

She threw it at him—like a bomb—and waited, breathless.

Anthony was silent; he had stopped polishing the glasses, suddenly, and was looking down at

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them; he put them on slowly and glanced across through the dimness—"I guess everybody's fond of Nurse Timberlake," he said.

"You know what I mean, Anthony—" Her tone reproached him. "We were down there—this afternoon——"

"Yes."

"Well—" she sighed a little—"there wasn't anything you could really put your finger on—but all of a sudden, I seemed to sense something—going on!" She turned to him sternly.

Anthony smiled. "I don't doubt there was—There generally is, isn't there—with Nurse Timberlake——?"

"I don't mean that—" said Mother quickly. "It was something special—before a thunderstorm, you know?" She leaned forward, looking at him significantly.

"Electricity!"

"You can call it what you want to," said Mother. "I'm disappointed—in Wally!"

"In Wallace?" Anthony sat up, and looked

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across at her. "Wallace can't do anything wrong!"

"I 'most wish you wouldn't make fun of me, Anthony." Her voice quavered a little—"I'm all upset——"

"Tell me about it," said Anthony gently.

"I'd been planning her for John you know," said Mother.

"Yes—and John—has he been planning her, too?"

"How do I know, Anthony!—I couldn't speak about it—to him—a thing like that——!"

"No—I suppose you couldn't. . . . I hadn't thought John was quite so badly hit as Wallace——" he said musingly.

"You've seen it——!" cried Mother.

Anthony checked himself—"Well, yes—I'd noticed—one or two things——" he said feebly. "I thought I'd noticed 'em——"

Mother's voice was muffled. "I don't see why you didn't tell me——!"

"I thought you saw it—Mother. There, there!—don't feel so!"

"I never—saw—a thing—" she sobbed. "Except just Wallace liking to come—and enjoying pie. . . . I thought he came to see *me!*"

"Of course he did!" said Anthony promptly. "He thinks the world and all of you—as if you were his Mother."

"And John is my boy, too! I don't see what I'm going to do about it—Anthony Wickham! Can they *both* marry her!"

"I don't think they'll want to," said Anthony consolingly. "Don't you think you'd better leave it to the Lord, Mother—and to Nurse Timberlake?" he added, after a moment.

Mother dried her eyes. "I don't believe she has the least idea!" she announced.

Anthony smiled, out of his dimness—"I don't feel too sure. . . . Her cap is a very becoming one! . . . and besides you don't know how John feels?"

"No," admitted Mother. "But I've always planned her for him—for John—you know—from the first——?"

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"Yes, I know. . . . Isn't there something about its taking two—to make a match?"

"It's just a kind of a joke for you, Anthony! But *I'm* the Mother of one of 'em and just as good as the mother of the other——"

"Better!" said Anthony.

But Mother did not heed him—"If I was sure about how he feels—about how John feels—I'd let Wallace have her!" she said magnanimously.

"He's coming—" said Anthony, turning to listen to a sound on the stairs. "You can ask him——"

"Anthony Wickham!" she whispered, "don't you dare say a word—not a word! . . . And don't you light up—not yet—till I've got my face dried off. . . ." She turned toward the door. "Is that you, John—come right in—we were talking about you—where have you been all day?"

"All in the dark—aren't you!" said John. He came across to the fire. "I can't see a thing!

But I judge everybody's here." He felt for a chair.

"We're here," said Anthony, "and glad you've come. I had something to ask you——"

"Don't bother John about things, Father!" said Mother warningly.

"This won't bother," said Anthony. "It's a young fellow I met in the book shop to-day. He wants to go to America. I told him I'd ask John what he thought——"

"It's all right to ask him that," said Mother graciously.

Anthony smiled—"I thought you'd let me."

So while the conversation took a safe turn—and John asked questions about the young man who wanted to go to America, and planned to see him, and agreed to help if he could—Mother retired into herself—and laid her plans to help Providence. . . .

Presently she broke in—"We were down to Nurse Timberlake's this afternoon," she said.

John turned a little. "I was there, too. I had to run away early—an engagement."

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"She said you'd been there," said Mother. She got up and lighted the gas. Then she put on her glasses and looked at him.

He was talking with Anthony again. . . . Mother waited, and watched him, and thought of Wallace, and got up impatiently, knocking down the tongs and fire shovel.

"Mother—what a racket for a little woman!" said John. He righted them and looked at her.

"You hadn't ever thought of getting married, I suppose—" said Mother casually.

He looked at her—and his eyes twinkled—"I might—if encouraged," he replied.

She glanced meaningly at Anthony. "I shouldn't think of encouraging you—nor discouraging you, either. It's a risk either way—" She broke off suddenly, a little quaver in her voice. "I guess I'm tired. I'd better go—to bed."

John got up and kissed her. "Good-night, Mother." He looked down on her, smiling. "Don't you worry about me, I shall have some-

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thing good to tell you—some day—if everything goes right,” he said.

“Oh, dear!” said Mother—“Oh, dear *me!* I can’t say another word!” She darted across the room, and closed the door safely between them.

John looked at it. “She’s all upset—isn’t she!”

“Tired—” said Anthony. “Mother’s tired—and things trouble her—when she’s tired.”

XXXIII

SHE QUESTIONS WALLACE

MOTHER was sitting in a green chair, looking at the wheels go "round and round." Wallace had persuaded her to come out—"You'll like it, Mother—come on! You're all used up. It will do you good."

Mother did look tired—there was no denying it—her face was screwed in little wrinkles, and there was a look in her eyes—as if she saw something coming that she hoped would not hit her. Sitting in her green chair, she watched the cars spin past and the crowd stroll along the walk—old men and dogs, women and boys; and Wallace watched Mother's face.

"What's worrying you?" he said.

"Nothing," said Mother promptly. "I'm feeling real good!" She told it off glibly, and Wallace looked down at her with a smile.

"You'd better tell me—" he said.

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She shook her head. "It's just a notion of yours I guess. Anthony was saying this morning, I looked peaked—but I feel first-rate. . . . A man wants to paint my picture," she said complacently, "—I guess I don't look so very bad!"

Wallace stared a little. "Who is it?" he asked.

Mother smiled. She had been keeping it for a surprise for Wallace. "A man—" she said, "—a man I saw in the book shop yesterday."

"Oh—you've been there!" Wallace did not care for the book shop.

"Anthony wanted me to go," said Mother humbly, "and you said you couldn't come yesterday; so I went."

"Did you like it?" asked Wallace after a pause.

"Pretty well," said Mother. "They talked kind o' loud and fast—all together, you know—and they shouted some—and laughed and hollered—but they acted as if they had a good time—all of 'em. I sat on a stool—for a

while, a high one, nobody seemed to notice much of anything, one way or the other; and then Mr. Boyden—the man that laughs, you know?” She looked at him.

Wallace nodded. “Yes, I know.”

“—He saw where I was—and he just laughed out—hard—and made me sit in his chair . . . my feet didn’t touch on the stool—not anywhere near——”

“Of course not,” said Wallace—“I don’t think it’s a very good place for you to go,” he added after a minute.

“Anthony likes it,” said Mother. “He says they have ideas. . . . This man that wants to paint my picture—he didn’t talk so much as the rest. He just sort of sat forward, looking— And when we got up to come away he asked Anthony if he supposed I’d let him do me.” There was pride in Mother’s voice. She was gazing uncritically at the crowd moving along the walk in front of them.

Wallace glanced down at her. He would look up this fellow who wanted to paint Mother.

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It was all very well for Wallace to make fun of her and enjoy her quaintnesses—but if any painter in a book shop thought he was going to hold her up to ridicule, he would find he had Wallace Tilton to deal with. . . . “What is his name?” he asked.

She looked up at him from her crowd—bewildered. . . . “I was just noticing about their hats—They’re queer—some of them——”

“They truly are!” said Wallace. “What was his name—this artist you spoke of?”

Mother brightened. “They called him—Cameron,” she said.

“Never heard of him,” said Wallace.

“He’s Scotch, I guess,” said Mother. “He told Anthony I made him think of his mother—in Scotland.”

Wallace’s face softened a little. “Well—he’s all right probably.”

“You think he’ll do a good likeness of me?” said Mother anxiously.

“Probably—if you made him think of his mother. It’s worth trying anyway.”

"I thought I'd like to have him try—" said Mother. "Nobody ever wanted to do me before—and we've never had a real good photographer in Bolton. . . . I had one likeness taken—but Anthony didn't like it. . . . The man rubbed out the wrinkles—I told him to do it—" said Mother a little guiltily. "I thought I should like it, maybe—but I didn't. It didn't look natural somehow——"

"Of course not," said Wallace. "You—without your wrinkles!" He smiled down at her affectionately, and the wrinkles smoothed themselves softly, one by one, leaving little lines of kindness and shrewd trust.

She turned them on the crowd. "I'm getting to like folks—a little," she said. "But it isn't like Bolton."

"Not in the least like Bolton!" said Wally. "But you'll like it first-rate in time—See if you don't."

She turned hopefully. "I don't suppose you ever felt—the way I do about it!"

He smiled a little. "I don't know that I can

say that. . . . The first year I was so homesick I would have given all my old shoes, to go back—and the second year I had a kind of melancholy resignation——”

“That’s what mine is, I think——”

“Perhaps——” Wallace smiled. “And the third year I caught on——”

“You caught what?”

“Caught on—understood people—how they were feeling down inside, you know. And now you couldn’t hire me to go back—It’s a big place,” he added, smiling down at her.

“That’s what I keep feeling—all the time——” said Mother swiftly, “—that it’s big. I’m like a kind of little leaf blowing around in it. . . . Maybe I might ‘catch on’ to something—the way you did—if we stayed long enough—but we shan’t——” she said hopefully, . . . “it’s only a month now!” She beamed on him.

“I shall miss you terribly,” said Wallace. “You hadn’t thought of that, I suppose?”

“Yes—you’ll miss us. . . . How did you do before we came over?” inquired Mother.

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"I existed—that's all—just barely existed." He did not think it necessary to give her all the details of existence before she "came over." Looking back on it now it seemed curiously futile. . . . Well—he was done with that—thanks to Mother—and pie! Wallace was not without a sense of humour about the pies and the part they had played in his regeneration.

"You'd better go back home with us," said Mother. She was looking at him affectionately.

"I couldn't be hired to go back—anywhere!" replied Wallace. "And this is home now." He waited a minute—"I shall probably marry and settle down here," he said slowly.

Mother jumped—nearly out of her green chair. "When are you going to get married?" she asked.

"Sometime—I—hope," said Wallace.

"Not to anybody in particular?" she beamed diplomatically.

"Not to anybody—in particular," assented Wallace. "Not yet—" He had turned in his chair and was watching the crowd—a little smile

played on his lip. . . . The shadows from the tree overhead fell on his face and flecked his grey coat. Mother, looking up at him, had a little sudden pang; he had always been a good-looking boy—and he was two inches taller than John. She sighed softly and looked back at the whirling crowd.

“I suppose if you married—an English woman, you’d *have* to stay over here anyway——?”

He dropped an eye on her. “Not if I wanted to go back,” he said comfortably, “—but I don’t.” He settled himself more firmly in his green chair.

“She might not like to leave her castle,” said Mother thoughtfully.

“Her castle!” He opened his eyes at her and laughed. “You think everybody lives in castles—since you’ve been to Thurlow!” He said it mockingly.

“Some of the nicest ones do,” said Mother.

“This one doesn’t. She is poor—works for her living.” He said it with quiet satis-

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faction. "I can give her more money in a year than she has had—in her whole life!" He laughed a little—and turned and looked down on her out of happy eyes.

Mother's mouth opened—and shut; she looked at him helplessly. Slowly a look came into her face—a deep, guileless look. . . . "You wouldn't *want* to marry a rich wife, would you, Wally—not one with a castle?"

"I should *not!*" said Wallace. He said it with emphasis.

And Mother smiled—the round, motherly smile that took in Wallace and the crowd and the motor-cars that went whizzing by beyond. "I'm glad you feel that way about it, Wallace. I might have known you would," said Mother. "You always did like your own way!"

XXXIV

AND LOSES HER CAP

"I'll put on my cap," said Mother.

The artist moved back a little, looking at her—"I was thinking of doing you in your bonnet and mantle," he said—"the way I saw you—the other day."

"I'd rather be taken in my cap," said Mother promptly. "Wallace brought it for me." She held out her hand to Wallace for her cap-box.

The artist watched the movement and turned toward his easel.

"You've got a looking-glass somewhere—?" said Mother, looking about her. The studio was singularly bare—grey walls, a great screen, three or four chairs, a little table and canvases stacked against the wall or standing propped against chairs. "I don't see any glass," said Mother, a little disappointment in her voice. "But I can

do without it, all right, I guess—Wallace will tell me—” She began to untie her bonnet strings slowly.

The artist was still looking at the bonnet—“You don’t think you would like to keep it on?” he suggested again.

She shook her head at him firmly. “I look better in my cap,” she said.

He turned away. “There is a looking-glass behind the screen.” He pushed his easel a little under the light and wheeled the model stand in place.

Mother disappeared behind the screen. Cameron looked toward Wallace, who was standing where Mother had left him, looking about the high, bleak room.

“Sit down, won’t you?” he said. “I’m frightfully disappointed, you know—I’d got an idea of how to do her—and there wasn’t any cap in it.” He smiled a little.

“I wanted to speak to you about the picture,” said Wallace. He had not seated himself. He was standing with his hand on the chair, look-

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ing at the artist. "I should like it to be my property when it is done."

The artist stirred a little and looked at him. "That's very kind," he said. "But I—I want to exhibit, you—know——"

Wallace returned the look. "We can decide about that when the picture is done," he said.

"I've an idea I can do something pretty good with it," said the artist. "I seemed to see it, the other day—I felt like a boy!"

Wallace sat down. "You don't mind my staying?"

"Not in the least—Make yourself at home."

"Now, where do you want me to sit?" said Mother. She had appeared around the corner of the screen in all the radiance of her cap.

The artist looked at her—Slowly a smile came to his face. He motioned toward the model stand.

"Up there—on that thing!" said Mother. "Mercy!"

She mounted it and unrolled her work. "I brought my knitting," she said. "I can knit

without looking on, and I like to be doing. . . .
Am I all right?"

"First-rate," replied the artist absently. He was walking about the stand, looking at her. "I shall have to set a new palette—" he said slowly. "I had one ready. But the cap changes the key—" He went back to his easel.

Mother looked at Wallace helplessly. "There isn't anything wrong with it—is there, Wally?" she whispered, putting up a hand.

"Your cap's all right, Mother—don't worry!"

The wrinkles smoothed themselves and Mother's needles moved swiftly,—happy, darting, twinkling lines of rhythm. The artist mixed his colours and watched the needles and watched the face. Wallace was talking to Mother, chaffing her, and the face looking down at the needles was shrewd and happy. The artist drew a line or two on the edge of his canvas.

Mother's quick eye caught the movement and a stone curtain dropped upon her. The happy

face became a blank—every wrinkle in it a stiff, hopeless ridge. “He’s beginning, Wally,” she said swiftly, “don’t interrupt!” Her expression set itself firmly ahead.

The artist dropped his brush—“You can talk, you know—all you want to,” he said a little desperately.

“I’d rather not talk—while I’m being taken,” said Mother. “I can’t keep my expression.”

The artist said nothing. He went on mixing a palette, a little grim smile on his face.

“You’re not doing me now, are you?” said Mother.

“No—I’m not doing you—I’m getting my palette ready.”

The stony look relaxed and Mother was looking down at her knitting again with the little shrewd, homely smile. . . . The artist moved swiftly across the room and placed another canvas on an easel, a little to the right, and drew a few quick strokes. His face held a kind of stern light.

Wallace Tilton watched him, smiling.

Mother knitted on, serene. Presently she looked up. "It takes a good while to get ready, doesn't it?" she said. She was finishing off a needle with a little flourish of fingers, and she set it anew and looked over her glasses at Wallace, the fingers flying nimbly of themselves.

The artist came back, guiltily, to his first easel. "I'm nearly ready," he said. He stood off and looked at her, and drew a long, slow line.

"You tell me when you're going to begin—?" said Mother.

"Yes."

"I've always noticed that, about painting," she said placidly, "when we've been having the kitchen done——It seemed as if they'd *never* get the colour right—fix and fuss half a day on it. The other rooms we always had done white, and they'd always get along fast enough on them."

The painter stole back to the other easel and put in a few stealthy lines while Mother rambled on.

So the two canvases went on—side by side—

one a little, old lady with her head a trifle bent, looking down at her knitting—Mother of all the world, thinking of her children; the other, a very prim old lady—who never had a wicked or unvirtuous thought in her life—looking with fixed smile into the cannon's mouth.

"It looks earnest, doesn't it," said Mother. She had climbed down from the model stand and was standing, surveying it doubtfully.

Wallace stood beside her, looking on and smiling a little.

"You think it looks like me, Wally?" she asked. She was peering at the rigid face.

"It isn't done yet—you know," said Wallace. He did not let his glance stray to the other easel. It was only when Mother had disappeared behind the screen, to put on her bonnet, that he walked over to it and stood looking down at it—with something between a laugh and a little quick clutch at his throat. . . . The artist, cleaning brushes across the room, nodded slowly and came over. "It's going to be all right—you think?"

Wallace glanced at him. "You could never do any better—not even with a bonnet on," he said.

The artist's face fell. "I did want that bonnet."

The bonnet reappeared. Mother bore her cap-box carefully in her hand. "I'm thinking of leaving it here—if it will be safe——"

"Perfectly safe," said the artist. "We'll put it up here——" He placed it on a high shelf and Mother looked at it with satisfaction. "I didn't want anything to happen to it," she said.

Just what did happen to it could never be rightly explained. But when Mother and Anthony appeared, the next morning, it had disappeared. The artist could not find it—there were so few places to look in the bare studio—and at last Mother was persuaded to mount the model-stand in bonnet and mantle. "It's my best one!" she said softly. She undid the mantle a little—fluffing out the feather edge and pulling the ribbon bows in place beneath

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her chin. "Do I look all right, Anthony?" she asked.

"Much as usual, Mother," said Anthony.

"I can bring my second-best cap to-morrow," she said, "—and I shall take it home with me— it's lucky I have two."

No one said anything and the artist worked swiftly. It behooved him to make hay while the sun was shining. "This is only a rough sketch, you know," he said casually, stepping back to look.

Mother's face relaxed—the little wrinkles rested themselves and beamed. "I don't need to be so particular how I look, then——?"

"Don't be particular at all," murmured the artist.

A kind of rapture held his face—there would be other sittings—but to-day he must catch the note of life that would fill them all and make them live. . . .

XXXV

HER PORTRAIT

It was partly John's plan, and partly Cameron's—to include Anthony in the picture. The artist's first thought when John spoke to him about doing a portrait of his father, had been that he would paint Anthony alone—a companion piece to the "Lady in a Bonnet." But as he saw Anthony and Mother together, day after day in the studio, they came gradually in his mind into the compass of one frame—with only the little table and a bowl of yellow nasturtiums between them. . . . In the end, this was the picture that went to the exhibition, and won for Cameron a place in the world of artists. . . . The wrinkles in Mother's face, and the soul looking out—and the bonnet—were irresistible. Anthony was hardly more than a shadow, a mere sketch, at the left of the picture—yet needed somehow, subtly, to complete its meaning.

As the work went on, Mother forgot to be

anxious. She even forgot to pose, and there was a comfortable understanding between her and the artist that this was a trial sketch—a rough thing, so to speak; the real work would begin when she donned her cap.

The studio grew to be a friendly meeting place. Wallace, coming in one day to escort Mother home, found Nurse Timberlake sitting looking at the portrait.

“She likes it, Wally!” announced Mother.

He shook hands with Nurse Timberlake gravely. “Very good, isn’t it?” He nodded toward the portrait.

“You don’t think Mr. Wickham is a little obscured?” she asked, looking thoughtfully toward it.

“No more than usual,” laughed Wallace. “And I suspect—” he looked again at the portrait—“I suspect that, as time goes on, he will come to seem all right—and in place. . . . There’s something about him—in his shadow in the background there—that keeps you wondering.”

"Of course," said Nurse Timberlake.

Wallace smiled a little. "Not so much of course—unless you happen to be an artist, like Cameron."

"He *has* caught the spirit——"

Mother, from her model-stand, looked down on them. "I can't hear what you're saying—very well——" she said—"unless you speak louder."

Nurse Timberlake came over to the stand. "We were saying it is going to be a good portrait." She nodded toward it.

"Anthony's in it, you see?" said Mother.

"Yes—We were just saying it is going to be capital of him."

"I want his legs stouter," said Mother, looking at it. "I've told Mr. Cameron about his legs. Anthony's legs are thin; but there's enough to 'em to stand on!—Did you see John?"

The nurse turned a puzzled face—"John——?"

"I sent him to you on an errand—to your rooms," said Mother.

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"Oh—I haven't been there all day."

"He can go again to-morrow—You'll be there to-morrow, I suppose?"

Nurse Timberlake shook her head. "I'm going to be away all day."

"We shan't be here much longer," replied Mother.

Nurse Timberlake turned an amused face on her—"What was the errand?" she asked.

The studio door opened—"There he is now!" said Mother.

He came over and shook hands, smiling at the group around the stand—"Just the place for you, Mother—on your throne." He moved over to the portrait.

"I want to see you a minute, John," said Mother mysteriously.

"All right, Mother—when you descend——"

"She's through for to-day," said the artist. "Too much chatter to work in." He moved the easel to one side.

Mother descended from her throne, and beckoned to John and they disappeared behind the

screen. The artist carried his brushes across the room.

Nurse Timberlake began to put on her gloves. Wallace watched her a minute. "Are you going right home?" he asked.

"Yes." She was buttoning them slowly.

"I'll walk with you if I may——"

"Didn't you come for 'Mother'?" she asked.

"John will take Mother," said Wallace decisively.

She appeared from behind her screen. "I wanted the pattern for my cap," she said, "the one you promised——" She was looking at Nurse Timberlake.

The nurse stood up. "I'll send it to-night. Good-bye, I must run on now——" She held out her hand.

"John will bring it," said Mother. "He's going along with you—to bring it." Nurse Timberlake's face had flushed a little—its easy flush. Wallace was looking at her. John, who had been speaking with the artist, came across—"All ready?" he asked.

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There was a little minute's silence.

"John's ready," suggested Mother.

"I'm going with Miss Timberlake," said Wallace. "I'll bring your cap-pattern, Mother." He did not exactly escort Nurse Timberlake from the room; but it certainly would not have been easy for any one else to come between him and his purpose. . . .

Mother looked after them, with a little murmur of disappointment. "Wallace is so quick—!" she said.

"That's why you like him—isn't it, Mother?"

She cast a swift look at John. She did not want John to be unhappy. "I like Wallace well enough. . . . But he doesn't know everything!"

John laughed out. "I have an idea he knows what he wants," he said easily.

Mother looked at him again and she looked at the portrait—where she sat, erect and competent, in her bonnet—and at Anthony, in his shadowy corner. Then she looked again at John—"I don't believe you'll ever get mar-

ried!" she said—"you're too much like him!" She nodded toward the portrait.

John smiled a little. "Father got married—" he said, looking at it affectionately.

"Yes-s. . . . He married *me*—"

"I wish I could do half as well," said John.

The corners of her mouth smiled a little—

John watched them. "Shall I tell you something, Mother?"

She turned her face on him, a little afraid and hopeful—"It's a discovery I've made," said John.

"Yes—?" She glanced hastily at the artist—he was busy with brushes.

"It's about women," said John. "Something I've found out—if you want them to like you, don't be too eager. Isn't that so—?" He was watching her, smiling. "Isn't that so—?"

"Yes, it's so." Mother's face lightened a little. "But I don't know how you found it out—" Then she sighed.

"I've lived with *you*, Mother and—" he hes-

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itated. "Never mind! I've found it out . . . and I'm not being too eager. But some day we shall see—!" He laughed happily.

Mother's eyes rested on him, full of love—and a little pity. "You come home to supper with me," she said. "I've got a new apple-pie for supper—and you can be just as eager with pie as you want to—I guess."

XXXVI

WALLACE'S SECRET

WALLACE came up the seventy-three steps, two at a time—barely stopping for an answer to his quick knock. Mother looked up—she was putting tea in the pot and she set it down, quickly. “John’s gone,” she said.

“Has he? I’m sorry. I thought I might catch him.” He walked over by the bird-cage and stood looking out across the roofs. His face beamed on tiles four hundred years old. He wheeled about and smiled at her—“I’ve got good news!” he said.

The tea-pot in Mother’s hand gave a little quick twist. She set it down again on the table—“Sit down, Wallace——”

He moved across the room—“I can’t sit down, Mother—I’m too happy! She is the nicest little thing— isn’t she!”

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Mother's face stared—then it beamed—
“Sit down, Wallace, and tell me all about her!”
she said.

Wallace laughed out—“There's nothing to
tell you about her—that you don't know.”

“You mean—?” Mother's wrinkles were
bent on him.

He nodded. “On the way home—I took my
chance—in a 'bus; awful jam—drivers shout-
ing and tooting. . . . Nothing very romantic
about that, I can tell you!” He laughed again.

Mother poured out a cup of tea and handed it
to him; her hand was shaking a little.

Wallace stopped suddenly and looked at her
—“You're not half as pleased as I thought you'd
be,” he said.

“I'm kind of excited about it, Wally—and—
and surprised,” she said swiftly.

“Surprised! I thought *everybody* knew.
She wasn't surprised.” He chuckled a little.
“She said I'd been deliberate enough about it—
You knew, didn't you?” He turned to look at
her.

"Knew—?" faltered Mother. Her glasses were blinking softly at him.

"Knew that I was bowled over—done up——!"

"Oh, yes—I knew *that*."

"Well, that's what I meant." Wallace took up his pie happily.

"I didn't know just how she'd feel about it," said Mother. "You can't always tell about women—how they feel."

"You're right—you can't!" laughed Wallace. "I'd have spoken months ago if I'd known!"

"That was before John came," said Mother quickly.

"—The first day I saw her!" assented Wallace—Then he stopped and flashed a look at her. "You're not worrying about him—?" he said.

Mother's face grew red. "I don't know what you're talking about, Wally."

Wallace's eyes studied the face—"I'd forgotten about that," he said softly.

Mother's figure grew very dignified in its

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plumpness. "I've never seen any one that I thought would do for John!" she said.

"My-my!" said Wallace. Then the teasing tone dropped. "You know I wouldn't cut in ahead of John—if I knew."

Mother's look was mollified. "John is very particular!" she replied.

Wallace smiled. "Only the best for John," he assented. "But my little girl will do for me!"

Mother's glance rested on him. "I don't see why you call her little, Wally—she's bigger than me!"

Wallace smiled at her. But Mother took no heed. "—I thought for a minute you must mean somebody else when you called her a little thing."

"She *is* little," asserted Wallace. "—A nice little thing! And *I'm* her protector!"—he touched his chest largely. "I am the big man—that's the way a man feels about his wife, Mother; he wants to take care of her and protect her—and provide for her——"

Mother jumped a little. She got up and fussed with the tea things and sat down. "Will she want to come and live with you, Wally—do you suppose?"

Wallace stared. "Why shouldn't she want to live with me?"

"Of course she'll live with you—yes. I only thought—I wondered—maybe she won't want to give up——"

"Give up nursing?" Wallace laughed out. "I don't think there will be any trouble about that. Of course she will have her charity—and her allowance—I shall see that she has an allowance, a good one, for charity." Wallace's face was full of comfortable assurance.

Mother stole a look at it—and looked in her teacup—and smiled. "You'll have a good many things to learn, won't you, Wally?" she said quietly.

"That's the nice part of it," said Wallace. He leaned toward her. "I can't tell you, Mother, how it makes me feel—to have some one to take care of—and I never should have

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known if it hadn't been for you." He was looking at her.

Mother's eyes blinked. "I know you'll be good to her, Wally. . . . And I wouldn't be too much disappointed—if I was you—if you can't do everything for her."

"It won't be my fault if I can't," said Wallace.

"I know that, Wallace," said Mother. "You've been real good to me—you couldn't have been better if you'd been my own—Oh, dear me!" said Mother, and suddenly she was rocking and sobbing a little. . . . And Wallace comforted her, smiling down at her roundness and wrinkles and tears.

XXXVII

ANTHONY GOES WITH HIS FRIEND

"You'd better wear your second-best one," she said.

Anthony looked at his second-best coat and hung it up again on its nail. "I think I'll call this my second-best," he said, looking down at the one he had on and smoothing it a little.

Mother examined it critically, through her glasses. "It seems extravagant," she said, "and it looks like rain—but, of course, he's a Lord. . . . You'll have to buy a new one, for best, if you take to wearing this one common."

"Yes."

"It will cost twenty-five dollars," said Mother.

Anthony finished tying his necktie. "I think John likes to do things for us, Mother," he said slowly. "We mustn't disgrace John——"

"You couldn't disgrace anybody, Anthony—"

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no matter *what* you wore," said Mother stoutly. She was looking at him through her round, proud spectacles.

"I didn't mean disgrace exactly, Mother. I think the boy *likes* to do it for us——"

"Of course he does," said Mother. She sighed a little—"and we might as well let him—it's the only comfort he's got now——"

Anthony made no reply. They had gone over the whole thing the night before, after he came in, sitting up till nearly twelve o'clock. They had gone over everything from the beginning—the kind of socks John wore when he was a baby—and John at play and John at school—and Mother had wept softly, and Anthony had comforted her the best he could. He could not, somehow, quite fancy that John's life was entirely blighted—there must still be comfort in life for a man with John's appetite. But Mother had found no solace in John's appetite. "I've never seen anybody I'd *want* him to marry, before," she had said, weeping a little.

"I've never felt so sure that John wanted to," said Anthony. His tone was thoughtful. He had come, in these days in London, to have a new sense of his son—a sense of a quiet, masterful force that took what it wanted without hurry and without doubt. "I think if John had wanted her, he would have had her," he said.

But Mother set it aside uncomforted. "Men don't know everything—Men don't know what they want," she had replied. And it proved to be the last word spoken.

She surveyed him now with tolerant eyes, turning him about, brushing off invisible specks. "You'll want to take your umbrella," she said, "and don't stay too long—talking. You'll have plenty of chances to talk—about everything there is to talk about."

There was a knock at the door, and Mother opened it and came back. "It's a telegram," she said. She held it out stiffly to Anthony and waited. She had never got used to telegrams—though Wallace had tried faithfully to train her, sending her three in one day to get her ac-

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customed to the uniformed, monkey-capped boy and the brown envelope.

Anthony opened it slowly and laid it down, and groped a little for something. She put his umbrella in his hand. "What does it say?" she asked.

"It's—an accident," said Anthony. He gathered up the paper and put it in his pocket. "It's lucky I was going—they want me——"

"Is it—the Lord?" asked Mother.

"Yes." His fingers reached blindly to something.

"You've got your umbrella—here," said Mother. "Now don't you go to getting upset, Anthony." She looked at him. . . . "You don't think I'd better go with you?"

"No." He bent and kissed her and went out. The paper in his pocket had told him more than he revealed to Mother—and Anthony went fast.

The heavy door opened to him, before he touched it.

"This way, sir," said the man. "We have muffled the bell. . . ."

There was no sound in the great house. The sun poured down through the staircase window and lay in spots on the stairs and rug. . . . "If you will wait here a minute Miss Timberlake will see you," said the man.

She came in quietly without her nursing cap and apron. "We came this morning—Sister and I. They sent us word—yes. The accident was yesterday—coming down from Thurlow. No one knows—it does not matter how it happened—now. . . . He is not suffering—no. They have given him something. . . ." She led the way up the stairs to a door and opened it softly.

"Mr. Wickham has come, Cousin Thurlow," she said, bending over him.

And the man put out a hand and groped—"Sit down," he said.

The nurse moved a little away. Lord Raleigh pushed up the bandage from his eyes. "I can't see very well," he said. "They have done me up—Sit down."

There was silence in the room. Anthony

waited quietly. Presently the man spoke—"It was my machine—" he said, "I—always knew—it would—end me." He smiled, under the bandage. "We talked about that——"

"We've talked about a great many things," said Anthony. He was going with the man—through the portal, along an unknown road. They both knew. There was nothing to say. But Anthony would go with him—to the Gate. . . . "I'm glad you've come," he said, and dozed a little, with the drug, and woke and spoke to the nurse and she moved to him quickly.

"Take it off," he said—he put up a hand—"It doesn't matter now."

The nurse removed the bandage with deft fingers, and the face lay against the pillow—a carved face, touched with the coming immortal look.

Anthony's eyes rested on it, and the eyes looked out at him—and went down—down—and flickered, and the nurse pressed her hand upon them. She looked at Anthony and he stood up—groping. . . . The man who understood him was not there now.

XXXVIII

A CABLE AND APPLE-PIE FOR JOHN

JOHN came in, and looked at Mother doubtfully, and crossed the room. Mother seemed not to notice. She went on with her baking. She was very considerate of John, these days. He opened his lips, and moved about a little and seemed about to say something, and changed his mind.

"I met Miss Timberlake on the stairs as I came up," he said at last.

"I wondered if you'd meet her," said Mother. "She was here quite a spell."

"She's going back to Thurlow, she says——?"

"Yes——" Mother waited. "Do you think Wallace knows yet?" she asked.

"He doesn't guess," said John. "He thinks she went to Thurlow and to the funeral as a nurse or something."

Mother smiled. "I've 'most thought perhaps

he'd break it off—when he knows—” She was watching John—but he seemed unmoved.

“Wally is not a fool,” he said.

“He isn't a fool exactly,” said Mother. “But he would hate—terribly—to marry a rich wife.”

“There's no disgrace in a rich wife—if you love her,” said John quickly.

“I didn't mean anything in particular, John,” said Mother—soothingly. “But Wally's always said it's the one thing he wouldn't do—he told me, one day, he wouldn't ever be a post-script to a rich wife—and he'll hate it terribly. And I don't blame him—I shouldn't want *you* to marry any one that was too important.” She looked at him affectionately and pityingly.

John returned the look—and opened his mouth and shut it, and went and stood by the window with his back to the room. . . . “There's something I've been thinking about, Mother,” he said slowly.

Mother was half-way into her kitchen—she looked back hastily—“Wait a minute, John, till

I take out my pie." She came back presently with a flushed face. "It 'most burned," she said.

"Should you mind going home, Mother?" said John abruptly. He had faced about and was looking at her.

"Right off?" said Mother.

"Within a week or so——"

She beamed on him. She looked about the little room—"I could be ready to-morrow!" she said.

"You wouldn't mind?" asked John.

"Mind!" said Mother. She looked about the room again—almost as if it were a secret, and London might not let her off.

"I should *love* to go!" she said. She drew a long breath. "I'll go now and begin to pack up; but the washing won't be back—not till to-morrow."

John laughed. "There's no such a hurry, you know. I have to wait—for a cable——"

"Is it business?" she asked.

"Yes-s—a kind of business. I can't tell you

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yet, Mother. . . . I only thought I'd see how you felt—if I should have to go.”

“You needn't think about me, John—nor about your father. I'll be glad to get him away. He hasn't been the same——”

“No—I know. But you don't *need* to go back. You and he could go on to the Continent——”

“Alone!” said Mother.

“You could have a courier——”

“I don't want it——” said Mother. “I don't know just what a courier is—but I don't want it, anyway—I'd rather go home——”

“Well, you shall go—if I do,” said John. He took up his hat. “I'll look in later and tell you.” And he was gone.

Mother disappeared into the bedroom and got down on her knees and pulled out trunks and boxes and began packing—a round, tremulous smile on her face.

Anthony came and found her there, and looked quietly down at the confusion. “Cleaning house?” he asked.

Mother looked up and blinked. "We're going home, Anthony!" The canary in his window heard it and trilled a little.

Anthony smiled. "I hadn't heard about it," he said.

She got up from her knees, dusting them off softly. "You want your dinner, don't you? I declare, I forgot it!" She bustled out into the other room, hurrying happily back and forth.

"It 'most makes me cry—I'm so happy!" she said. "I did cry a little—after John went. But it hindered the packing——"

"John's been here, has he?" said Anthony.

"He came in—all worked up—and fussed and fidgeted; and finally he got it out—that he wants to go home. I told him I'd go to-morrow!" Mother beamed.

"What's happened?" said Anthony.

Mother looked at him. . . . "I guess we know what's happened, Anthony."

"Do we?" Anthony returned the look, puzzled.

Mother nodded with deep significance.

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"He told you, then?" said Anthony.

"I didn't need any telling," said Mother. "He *said* it was business, and he'd have a cable to-day—but *I* knew well enough what he meant by a cable! John's heart is broke!—that's what's happened!"

"Why—Mother!" Anthony smiled a little and took his cup and stirred it thoughtfully—"You think John is running off home because——"

"You don't need to say it that way, Anthony! Of course, he'll go in a boat! You say 'running off home'—just as if——"

"Just as if he was a coward!" said Anthony quietly.

"Well—something like that. It makes him sound ridiculous!" said Mother sternly.

"John won't be ridiculous," said Anthony.

"That's what I meant!" said Mother. "You don't need to tell me that John Wickham won't be ridiculous—He's coming now!"

The door opened and John came in. He was smiling. He came across and kissed his mother

and sat down. "Just in time for lunch!—Anything left?"

Anthony passed him a plate and Mother went into her kitchen. She came back laden with good things.

Anthony looked at them quietly. "It pays to come late," he said.

"I thought maybe John would be here—or Wally," said Mother. She set down the good things in front of him—her face round with questions, but in silence. John helped himself.

"You're ready to go, I suppose," he said casually.

Mother looked up—"I've begun to pack," she said.

"Everything in but her toothbrush," said Anthony.

"Did—your cable—come?" asked Mother innocently. She had a warning eye on Anthony.

"Yes." There was silence in the room—and the canary cocked his eye at the silent table, singing hard. . . .

John took a bit of paper from his pocket and handed it across to Mother.

She looked—and her fingers fussed at it, and then she looked at him—and at Anthony, significantly. . . . “It just says ‘Yes.’ I suppose that means we’ll go?” she said slowly.

“It means we’ll go,” said John. He laughed out, looking at her. “It means you’ll have a new daughter, Mother!”

The canary trilled a whole roulade, filling the notes with light . . . and Mother looked at John through the whirl of them—“What did you say—John?”

Anthony was smiling at her gently. Her son got up and came over and kissed her—“That’s what it means, Mother—that Kitty Arden says ‘yes’!”

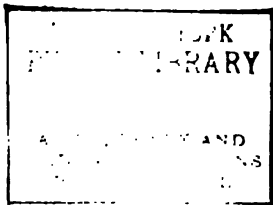
“I don’t know any Kitty Arden—” said Mother helplessly. . . .

“She’s your daughter,” said John. “But it was a close call.”

“I thought it was a cable,” said Mother.



"It means you'll have a new daughter, Mother"



"So it was—at last!" laughed John. "She hated to say it!" He looked at the cable a little fondly and proudly.

"You mean she didn't want to marry you—!" said Mother, looking up at him, indignation in all her roundness.

He nodded. "Hated to—the worst way!" He laughed out. "I had to run off first—before she found out." Mother glanced at Anthony. "I've engaged passage for Wednesday—will you be ready?" added John.

"I'm most ready now," said Mother. But she was looking at him wistfully. "It seems queer, that you're going to marry—some one I never saw—" she said.

He patted the shoulder. "She's nicer than any one you ever saw, Mother—and a world too good for me," he added quickly. "And I'm going to marry her before she has time to change her mind—again."

Mother gasped a little—and he laughed down at her.

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“She’s all right, Mother. You’ll like her— even better than—Nurse Timberlake.” He bent and kissed her again, and was off.

Anthony smiled at her. She wiped away the little tear—and looked at him almost guiltily.

“How do you suppose he guessed about Nurse Timberlake?” she asked.

XXXIX

MOTHER PACKS HER TRUNK

THE packing went forward rapidly. Wallace coming in found Mother sitting on top of next-to-the-last trunk, pressing it firmly down. "It's packed pretty full," she said beaming on him and drawing a deep breath. "It needs two——"

She moved a little to one side, and Wallace sat on it with her, and helped her strap it, and she brought out the piece of pie. "You *will* miss us, won't you, Wally," she said, watching him. "And I don't suppose you'll ever be coming over home either——" she looked at him wistfully.

Wallace shook his head—"Don't want to go back—except to see you. Old England's good enough for me!"

"Yes—I know *you* like it. It's lucky about your wives, isn't it?"

He looked at her——

"Yours and John's—letting you live where

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you want to—both of you. . . . You didn't ever see her, did you?" she asked suddenly, looking at him.

"Her——?"

Mother nodded—"John's wife, you know."

Wallace laughed. "You get on so fast—with your wives, Mother! Yes, I've seen her. I used to see Kitty Arden rather often."

Mother's face lighted. "What is she like, Wally? I can't get anything out of John—not anything sensible."

"She's the prettiest girl you ever saw," said Wallace.

"Prettier than Nurse Timberlake?" asked Mother, guileless.

"Much!" Wallace was serene.

Mother looked at him with reproach in her cap. "You hadn't ought to say that, Wallace!"

"It's the truth," said Wallace. He looked at the last piece of pie and took it. "There are a good many men would have liked to marry Kitty Arden," he said slowly.

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"I hope she'll make a good sensible wife for John," said Mother.

"You aren't afraid of any one that John picks out, are you—?" His eyes were twinkling at her.

"Not—exactly," said Mother.

"You needn't be afraid for Kitty," said Wallace. "She has kept her head level through things that would have spoiled a good many girls—with all that money——"

Mother looked at him—"What did you say, Wally?"

"I said that with all the money she's had to spend—and no mother——"

"John told me her mother was dead—but he didn't tell me about the money——"

Wallace chuckled. "She's one of the richest girls in the States." He was watching Mother's face. "Her father is John Arden, of the United Steel and Wire, you know."

"He said his name was John," said Mother.

"Worth millions," said Wallace.

"Oh, dear!" Mother's face had grown full

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of round woe—"How can I visit 'em, Wally, and take care of the babies if they have—a million dollars!"

"Million-dollar babies have tummies, don't they, Mother—same as dollar-ones? I guess you can coddle 'em all right. They'll have rows of nurse-maids in white caps, of course," said Wallace wickedly. "But you'll find it's all right. I shouldn't want a rich wife myself——"

"When did you see Nurse Timberlake?" said Mother swiftly.

He stared at her—"I believe you're jealous for her! . . . I haven't seen—Alicia"—he said the name happily—"I haven't seen her—since Wednesday. She's up at Thurlow, you know."

"I knew she'd gone to Thurlow," said Mother. Her tone was mysterious.

He looked at her. "What do you mean?" Mother shook her head. "Nothing!"

"You know better—you've got something on your mind——"

"Well—you kept saying things about

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John!" Mother looked at him, her feathers ruffled.

"I didn't say anything about John—except that Kitty is rich."

"She doesn't own a castle—" said Mother. "I'm not going to say another word," she shut her mouth, squeezing it tight.

Wallace looked at her narrowly—"Go ahead!" he said.

But she shook her head hard. "It isn't your fault, Wally—and I *shan't say a word*——!"

Wallace looked up. Anthony had come in and was smiling at them, quietly. "Anything wrong?" he asked.

"Suppose you tell me what Mother means," said Wallace. "I just happened to say something about Kitty Arden and she's bristling with hints——"

"What did you say about Kitty?" asked Anthony.

"That she's rich—you knew that."

"Yes, John told me——"

"And I said folks that live in glass houses

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better be careful," said Mother, still mysterious—"That's all I said."

Wallace turned to Anthony . . . ?

Anthony smiled. "That's what Mother means, I guess, Wallace."

And between them Wallace Tilton learned—a word at a time from Anthony, with breathless gusts from Mother—Wallace learned the truth. . . . He turned it slowly in his mind—

"Serves me right!" he said.

"It isn't your fault, Wally! I told you it wasn't your *fault!*" said Mother consolingly.

Wallace laughed shortly and got up. "Well, I must be off—to Thurlow Castle!" he said. "I shall have a word to say to Miss Alicia Timberlake!" He bent and kissed Mother, and looked down at her gently and kissed her again—"It's all your fault," he said. "I shouldn't have thought of marrying her if it hadn't been for you—and your pies!" And he was gone.

Mother looked at the door wistfully—almost regretfully—and went back to her packing.

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"Talking that way about *John!*" she said softly into the depths of the trunk.

She lifted her head suddenly. "Do rich folks always have nurse-maids in caps—rows of them, Anthony?"

"Rows of them—in caps?" Anthony's mind went slowly.

Mother nodded. "To take care of the babies?"

Anthony smiled. "I guess they do—when they have the babies. They don't all of 'em have babies, you know!"

Mother returned to her trunk. "John will," she said softly again in the depths.

Anthony came to the door and looked in at her. "I'm going out a little while," he said.

Mother emerged—"Where you going?" she asked.

"Just anywhere—on a 'bus—perhaps—" Anthony's tone was vague.

Mother looked at her second-best bonnet, and turned it round. She had been trying to find a place for it—a safe place. She put it on her

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head. "I think I'll go with with you," she said.

Anthony glanced at the trunk—"You haven't time, have you?"

"I'm packed—all but this. Maybe I shall carry it in my hand, anyway, in a box—" She tied the strings elaborately under her chin, looking at her roundness in the glass. "I feel kind of queer, somehow," she said slowly. "I've been wanting to go—seemed as if I couldn't wait to go; and now the time's come, I feel as if I didn't want to—not exactly."

"We can stay—" said Anthony.

"Oh—I don't mean that—" said Mother hastily. . . . "But it seems as if I'd ought to have seen more—paid more attention perhaps. I feel real queer about it!" She put on her gloves and took up her net-bag. "I'm ready," she announced.

"Go where there's a crowd," she said—"anywhere the crowd is. That's the most like London."

"We'll take No. 6," said Anthony.

It was coming rapidly down the street, and he

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hailed it and Mother scrambled aboard, breathless.

She gave a little triumphant nod as they mounted to the top—"That's one of the things I've got so I can do," she said seating herself firmly. "I can get on and off while they're going—pretty fast. I used to be real mad when they didn't stop. Now I don't wait to be mad—I just climb on!"

Anthony laughed. "We've learned a good many things in London—" he said musingly.

"You have," said Mother. She looked up at him a little wistfully. "It doesn't seem as if I'd learned much—just how to get on a 'bus!"

"There are people who have lived in London all their lives who can't do it," said Anthony consolingly.

"Do you think so?" Mother brightened. She beamed down on the crowd from her 'bus. "I most wish we'd stayed longer," she said. "I'm getting kind o' used to it, I guess—Look how queer they be, Anthony—all running every which way!"

Anthony leaned over beside her and they watched the crowd—down the Strand, along by the Lions and Trafalgar Square and Pall Mall, up Regent Street and Piccadilly and the Circus and Oxford. . . . The city played its game of darting crowds and cabs and 'buses and tangled life, and Mother looked down on them—half-guiltily, half-wistfully—her face screwed in its soft wrinkles.

“It does make my head whirl!” she said. “I keep wondering where they’re all going to—and what they’re after!—Look at that old thing, Anthony!” Mother pointed out the broad-backed, broad-skirted figure that ambled with the crowd, her bonnet askew and her skirts tilting over the shabby, run-over shoes and gaping stocking-heels. Mother looked down on them—incredulity in her face. “Wouldn’t you think she’d just want to *cry*, Anthony!”

Anthony watched the waddling figure, with his little, gentle smile—“*You’re* the one that wants to cry, I guess, Mother. *She* looks pretty

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comfortable—as if she enjoyed carrying her taper—” he added softly.

“Carrying her *what*, Anthony?—You must shout louder up here.”

“I said carrying her taper,” said Anthony. And the ’bus lurched and stopped and the words roared themselves out——

“Sh’h!” said Mother. “Mercy! everybody’ll hear us!”

But no one seemed to care. Passengers climbed down and new ones climbed up, and the traffic roared.

“They all seem to be carrying tapers—don’t you see?” said Anthony looking down—“little tapers——”

Mother leaned further over—“I don’t see anything that looks like a taper—or *any* kind of light,” she said.

Anthony smiled. “They’re not in sight—they’re far inside somewhere—little tapers of life—and they carry them carefully—every one guarding his own and feeding it—fighting for

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it . . . and nobody knows why—only he mustn't let the fire go out. . . .”

Mother looked at him uneasily—Anthony had not had a queer spell for weeks——

“They look to me just like folks hurrying to get somewhere,” she said practically. “And that old woman with no stockings on—hardly—ought to be shut up!”

Anthony smiled at her—“Just think how she keeps her taper burning!—in all that dark,” he said softly. “She is a brave soul—I think——”

Mother said nothing. But deep thoughts held her. It was time they went home! She was glad they were going home. . . . Perhaps when they got back to Bolton Anthony would forget London and queerness—and old women, with no stockings hardly, carrying their tapers carefully along on Oxford Street.

XL

THE SHOP WHERE NOTHING HAPPENS

FAT SAMUEL puffed a little and sighed, and reached out for another pair and looked at them scornfully and fell to work with waxed thread. It had not been easy for Samuel to keep pace with the feet of Bolton. He had come to look suspiciously at feet on the street; and he grudged the children their very skipping-ropes and hop-scotch—wearing out good leather! He drew the waxed thread wrathfully in and out and scowled at the window where the sun played along cobwebs and made little dusty, dancing motes and fell on the empty bench across the room. There were shoes on the bench, shoes on the floor—shoes everywhere. . . . The door gave a little click and tingle, and swung open and Samuel looked up and scowled—and changed to a slow, long, doubtful gaze—a sweet, fat smile that broke through the gloom.

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Anthony stood looking at him and at the shop—at the dust and cobwebs, and the shoes on the floor. He came over and held out his hand.

And Samuel's took it, doubtingly, and rubbed along his apron, and his mouth came together. "I didn't know you'd got here," he said.

"Came last night," said Anthony. "Plenty of work, I see—" He nodded at the chaos of shoes.

"Too much for *me!*" grumbled Samuel. He took up his stiff thread and fell to work, with a covert eye on Anthony Wickham. He had heard rumours of London and of Anthony—

Anthony took off his hat and coat slowly and hung them up, his glance taking in with a smile the old, worn bits of leather and the clutter on the floor. He tied on the striped apron and crossed to his bench; and took up a pair and looked at them and looked over his glasses at Samuel—"Judge Fox's best?" he said.

Samuel nodded. "I put off best ones," he said. "I can't do 'em!" He scowled fiercely, and stabbed holes and sewed on.

Anthony blew a little dust from the boots and set them aside; his thin fingers sorted the pairs on the bench and reached to the floor, and ranged them along before him. . . . "I'll do the fine ones first," he said softly.

A look of fat relief stole into Samuel's face and spread above the waxed ends. "I've done *my* best on 'em," he grunted, "worked myself to the bone with 'em!"

Anthony's smile flitted across the bulk of Samuel, and drew in the room. "You've done first-rate, Samuel. It's hard work—doing shoes alone."

Samuel's gaze relaxed subtly. The shop was not the same—there were shoes on the floor, but they were hopeful shoes; and the children skipping outside and calling to each other, sounded happy. . . . The door tingled and opened and a little girl peeped in and held out a pair of shoes—and Samuel smiled at her and she dropped them hastily and withdrew.

Anthony picked them up—"Joe Gibson's," he said. . . . The school bell rang and jangled

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and the voices calling outside died away. . . . Anthony fell to work—the same old stitching, gentle rhythm, tap-a-peg, tap-a-peg, tap-tap-tap—

The bell above the door jingled—all Bolton had heard that Anthony Wickham was back—all day they came. . . . It was the same Anthony Wickham who had gone away—less than a year ago—yet somehow a subtly different Anthony. You have to look a little at a man who has been in London a year—nearly a year. . . . And they looked at him curiously, and brought him shoes—and left them.

Each time the bell tingled, more shoes lay heaped on the floor. After dinner there was a little lull and Samuel and Anthony sewed and pegged in silence. It was the same old shop, where nothing happened. Only Anthony, with England behind him and the roar of London coming and going gently in his thought, was perhaps a little different; but the same sunshine was on the floor, the same dusty motes danced above

it, and the same shreds of leather and waxed ends lay everywhere.

The door opened tremulously, and gasped a little and stood still, and Anthony looked up. "Why, Mother!"

"It's come!" she said. She held out the envelope. "It's come. I knew it would—, but somehow I didn't quite—expect it." She sat down breathless.

Anthony took the envelope and opened it and looked at her over his glasses. "They'll be here to-night. That's good, isn't it!"

"There isn't a thing in the house, Anthony—not a thing to eat!" said Mother.

He read the telegram again. "But they're going to the hotel. 'Kitty and her father will go to the hotel,' that is what it says—they will go to the hotel. You have enough for John to eat, I guess."

Mother's round gaze rested on him, pityingly. "You can't let your own folks go to a hotel, Father!"

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"It isn't John," said Anthony. "It is Kitty——"

"It is just the same," said Mother firmly. "I know what I mean, Anthony, and you know; you can't make me comfortable that way. I've got to get right back——;" and she looked about the shop a little helplessly and sighed, "I wouldn't mind so much if he wasn't a millionaire," she said softly. "I was going to have cornbeef for supper——"

Samuel plodded on over his stitches.

"—and potatoes," said Mother, "and some of that cabbage that was left over—it'll taste good—and carrots; it don't sound right for a millionaire somehow——!"

Anthony looked at her with the little affectionate smile between his eyes. "Don't you worry, Mother. Everything you do will be just right. You will make it homelike for them and that's what John wants——"

"I shall make an apple pie——" said Mother. "I shall make two pies," she added swiftly. "You can't tell what might happen."

"It isn't Wallace," said Anthony, smiling.

"I shall make two pies," said Mother, "two apple-pies—with a good crust, upper and under. Men folks like my pies—as a rule," she added modestly.

She got up and smoothed her apron.

"Don't you worry about me, Anthony. I shall get along all right. I just came down to tell you—so you'd get home, time enough to put on your second-best ones."

Anthony took up his hammer and began to look for pegs. She regarded him a minute, a little pride in her face—"I don't know but you might as well wear your best ones," she said slowly—"the ones you got in London."

Samuel reached for another pair of shoes and Mother went out.

The bell tingled behind her.

It tingled again for the big man who came in and tilted comfortably back and watched Anthony's hammer tap its way around the sole.

"Going to keep on mending, just the same, are ye?" he asked.

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"Just the same," said Anthony. "It's my business, you know—mending shoes."

"I hear John's doing well—?" replied the man.

Anthony stitched on, and pegged a little. . . . "He's going to be married next month, you know?" He looked over his glasses.

"That so!" The chair tilted itself a little farther back and the big man looked at him benevolently, and the bell jingled again and Anthony broke off to take shoes—but it was only Simon, hopping in—

"Know what they call ye?" he asked nimbly—"‘Anthony London!’ I heard one of ’em as I come along—Anthony London," he said. "He'd got you kind o' mixed up, I guess!" Simon laughed glibly and sat down. Samuel scowled at him and went on stitching—the less said about London, the better—in Samuel's eyes. But he was not to escape. . . . He was to know Fleet Street—as if he had been born there—Fleet Street with its whirling, banging and slamming, and shuffling feet—and the

dome of St. Paul's floating behind its feather of smoke. . . . Samuel could not be called an imaginative man, but he saw the visions—St. Paul's and all London shaping themselves in Anthony's gentle words—and he dreamed, dully, of a great, ever-going city across the world.

"I hear the Rich grind the faces of the Poor pretty bad over there!" said the big man, tilting happily.

Anthony looked up. "I didn't see any grinding going on," he said with a twinkle. . . . But his face had grown thoughtful.

"There are very poor people in London," he said slowly, tapping it into the sole on his lap—"poorer than anywhere in the world, I think." He set the shoes on the bench beside him. "They have no hope," he said.

"That's bad!" said the big man—solidly and comfortably, tilting a little further back.

Samuel grunted. Anthony glanced over at him. "Do the best you can with 'em, Samuel. Gibson's hard on his shoes——"

"Drunk half the time!" said the big man. "I

hear they're going to take away the property of Lords, and so on—give it to the Poor. How do you think the Lords will like that?" He asked it ponderously.

Simon peered up; it sounded blasphemous and interesting—and hopeful.

Anthony shook his head. "It will be a long time, I think, before they take it all away."

The big man looked at him—suspiciously. "I saw it in a paper," he said— "the same place where I saw about grinding the faces of the poor. Did you *see* any lords?" he asked, with a little suspicion still in his voice.

"I saw one," said Anthony. He waited a minute. "*He* had his property taken away from him—all his possessions taken away—in a minute—everything."

"How did he like that?" said the big man, triumphant.

Anthony's eyes seemed looking at something far away—as far as London, it might be. "He didn't seem to mind," he said. "He let them go——"

The big man stared at him. The legs of the chair came ponderously down.

“Well—I swunny!—That beats me—Never minded!” He got up and stretched himself—and looked at Anthony. “Never minded!” he said—and went slowly out, turning over London in his mind.

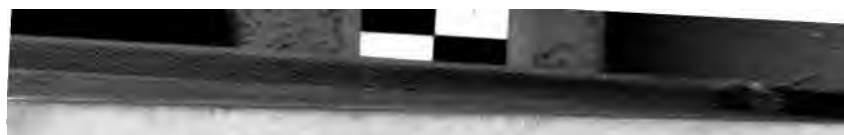
Simon skipped behind him and the little shop was quiet—only Anthony London, maker and mender of shoes, stitching on, and fat Samuel, growing steadily serene in his gloom. . . . Outside, through the open window, they heard the voices of children running and shouting and wearing out shoes for Anthony to mend.













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