

JACOB AUGUST RIIS

NEIGHBORS: LIFE STORIES
OF THE OTHER HALF

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Содержание

PREFACE	4
THE ANSWER OF LUDLOW STREET	5
KIN	10
THE WARS OF THE RILEYS	13
LIFE'S BEST GIFT	21
DRIVEN FROM HOME	26
THE PROBLEM OF THE WIDOW SALVINI	30
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	32

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PREFACE

These stories have come to me from many sources—some from my own experience, others from settlement workers, still others from the records of organized charity, that are never dry, as some think, but alive with vital human interest and with the faithful striving to help the brother so that it counts. They have this in common, that they are true. For good reasons, names and places are changed, but they all happened as told here. I could not have invented them had I tried; I should not have tried if I could. For it is as pictures from the life in which they and we, you and I, are partners, that I wish them to make their appeal to the neighbor who lives but around the corner and does not know it.

JACOB A. RIIS.

THE ANSWER OF LUDLOW STREET

“You get the money, or out you go! I ain’t in the business for me health,” and the bang of the door and the angry clatter of the landlord’s boots on the stairs, as he went down, bore witness that he meant what he said.

Judah Kapelowitz and his wife sat and looked silently at the little dark room when the last note of his voice had died away in the hall. They knew it well enough—it was their last day of grace. They were two months behind with the rent, and where it was to come from neither of them knew. Six years of struggling in the Promised Land, and this was what it had brought them.

A hungry little cry roused the woman from her apathy. She went over and took the baby and put it mechanically to her poor breast. Holding it so, she sat by the window and looked out upon the gray November day. Her husband had not stirred. Each avoided the question in the other’s eyes, for neither had an answer.

They were young people as men reckon age in happy days, Judah scarce past thirty; but it is not always the years that count in Ludlow Street. Behind that and the tenement stretched the endless days of suffering in their Galician home, where the Jew was hated and despised as the one thrifty trader of the country,

tortured alike by drunken peasant and cruel noble when they were not plotting murder against one another. With all their little savings they had paid Judah's passage to the land where men were free to labor, free to worship as their fathers did—a twice-blessed country, surely—and he had gone, leaving Sarah, his wife, and their child to wait for word that Judah was rich and expected them.

The wealth he found in Ludlow Street was all piled on his push-cart, and his persecutors would have scorned it. A handful of carrots, a few cabbages and beets, is not much to plan transatlantic voyages on; but what with Sarah's eager letters and Judah's starving himself daily to save every penny, he managed in two long years to scrape together the money for the steamship ticket that set all the tongues wagging in his home village when it came: Judah Kapelowitz had made his fortune in the far land, it was plain to be seen. Sarah and the boy, now grown big enough to speak his father's name with an altogether cunning little catch, bade a joyous good-by to their friends and set their faces hopefully toward the West. Once they were together, all their troubles would be at an end.

In the poor tenement the peddler lay awake till far into the night, hearkening to the noises of the street. He had gone hungry to bed, and he was too tired to sleep. Over and over he counted the many miles of stormy ocean and the days to their coming, Sarah and the little Judah. Once they were together, he would work, work, work—and should they not make a living in the

great, wealthy city?

With the dawn lighting up the eastern sky he slept the sleep of exhaustion, his question unanswered.

That was six years ago—six hard, weary years. They had worked together, he at his push-cart, Sarah for the sweater, earning a few cents finishing “pants” when she could. Little Judah did his share, pulling thread, until his sister came and he had to mind her. Together they had kept a roof overhead, and less and less to eat, till Judah had to give up his cart. Between the fierce competition and the police blackmail it would no longer keep body and soul together for its owner. A painter in the next house was in need of a hand, and Judah apprenticed himself to him for a dollar a day. If he could hold out a year or two, he might earn journeyman’s wages and have steady work. The boss saw that he had an eye for the business. But, though Judah’s eye was good, he lacked the “strong stomach” which is even more important to a painter. He had starved so long that the smell of the paint made him sick and he could not work fast enough. So the boss discharged him. “The sheeny was no good,” was all the character he gave him.

It was then the twins came. There was not a penny in the house, and the rent money was long in arrears. Judah went out and asked for work. He sought no alms; he begged merely for a chance to earn a living at any price, any wages. Nobody wanted him, as was right and proper, no doubt. To underbid the living wage is even a worse sin against society than to “debase its

standard of living,” we are told by those who should know. Judah Kapelowitz was only an ignorant Jew, pleading for work that he might earn bread for his starving babies. He knew nothing of standards, but he would have sold his soul for a loaf of bread that day. He found no one to pay the price, and he came home hungry as he had gone out. In the afternoon the landlord called for the rent.

Another tiny wail came from the old baby carriage in which the twins slept, and the mother turned her head from the twilight street where the lights were beginning to come out. Judah rose heavily from his seat.

“I go get money,” he said, slowly. “I work for Mr. Springer two days. He will give me money.” And he went out.

Mr. Springer was the boss painter. He did not give Judah his wages. He had not earned them, he said, and showed him the door. The man pleaded hotly, despairingly. They were hungry, the little kids and his wife. Only fifty cents of the two dollars—fifty cents! The painter put him out, and when he would not go, kicked him.

“Look out for that Jew, John,” he said, putting up the shutters. “We shall have him setting off a bomb on us next. They turn Anarchist when they get desperate.”

Mr. Springer was, it will be perceived, a man of discernment. Judah Kapelowitz lay down beside his wife at night without a word of complaint. “To-morrow,” he said, “I do it.”

He arose early and washed himself with care. He bound the

praying-band upon his forehead, and upon his wrist the tefillin with the Holy Name; then he covered his head with the tallith and prayed to the God of his fathers who brought them out of bondage, and blessed his house and his children, little Judah and Miriam his sister, and the twins in the cradle. As he kissed his wife good-by, he said that he had found work and wages, and would bring back money. She saw him go down in his working clothes; she did not know that he had hidden the tallith under his apron.

He did not leave the house, but, when the door was closed, went up to the roof. Standing upon the edge of it, he tied his feet together with the prayer shawl, looked once upon the rising sun, and threw himself into the street, seventy feet below.

“It is Judah Kapelowitz, the painter,” said the awed neighbors, who ran up and looked in his dead face. The police came and took him to the station-house, for Judah, who living had kept the law of God and man, had broken both in his dying. They laid the body on the floor in front of the prison cells and covered it with the tallith as with a shroud. Sarah, his wife, sat by, white and tearless, with the twins at her breast. Little Miriam hid her head in her lap, frightened at the silence about them. At the tenement around the corner men were carrying her poor belongings out and stacking them in the street. They were homeless and fatherless.

Ludlow Street had given its answer.

KIN

Early twilight was setting in on the Holy Eve. In the streets of the city stirred the bustling preparation for the holiday. The great stores were lighting up, and crowds of shoppers thronged the sidewalks and stood stamping their feet in the snow at the crossings where endless streams of carriages passed. At a corner where two such currents met sat an old man, propped against a pillar of the elevated road, and played on a squeaky fiddle. His thin hair was white as the snow that fell in great soft flakes on his worn coat, buttoned tight to keep him warm; his face was pinched by want and his back was bent. The tune he played was cracked and old like himself, and it stirred no response in the passing crowd. The tin cup in his lap held only a few coppers.

There was a jam of vehicles on the avenue and the crush increased. Among the new-comers was a tall young woman in a fur coat, who stood quietly musing while she waited, till a quavering note from the old man's violin found its way into her reveries. She turned inquiringly toward him and took in the forlorn figure, the empty cup, and the indifferent throng with a glance. A light kindled in her eyes and a half-amused smile played upon her lips; she stepped close to the fiddler, touched his shoulder lightly, and, with a gesture of gentle assurance, took the violin from his hands. She drew the bow across the strings once or twice, tightened them, and pondered a moment.

Presently there floated out upon the evening the familiar strains of "Old Black Joe" played by the hand of a master. It rose above the noise of the street; through the rattle and roar of a train passing overhead, through the calls of cabmen and hucksters, it made its way, and where it went a silence fell. It was as if every ear was bent to listen. The crossing was clear, but not a foot stirred at the sound of the policeman's whistle. As the last strain of the tune died away, and was succeeded by the appealing notes of "Way Down upon the Suwanee River," every eye was turned upon the young player. She stood erect, with heightened color, and nodded brightly toward the old man. Silver coins began to drop in his cup. Twice she played the tune to the end. At the repetition of the refrain,

"Oh, darkies, how my heart grows weary,
Far from the old folks at home,"

a man in a wide-brimmed hat who had been listening intently emptied his pockets into the old man's lap and disappeared in the crowd.

Traffic on street and avenue had ceased; not a wheel turned. From street cars and cabs heads were poked to find out the cause of the strange hold-up. The policeman stood spellbound, the whistle in his half-raised hand. In the hush that had fallen upon the world rose clear and sweet the hymn, "It came upon a midnight clear," and here and there hats came off in the crowd.

Once more the young woman inclined her head toward the old fiddler, and coins and banknotes were poured into his cup and into his lap until they could hold no more. Her eyes were wet with laughing tears as she saw it. When she had played the verse out, she put the violin back into its owner's hands and with a low "Merry Christmas, friend!" was gone.

The policeman awoke and blew his whistle with a sudden blast, street cars and cabs started up, business resumed its sway, the throng passed on, leaving the old man with his hoard as he gazed with unbelieving eyes upon it. The world moved once more, roused from its brief dream. But the dream had left it something that was wanting before, something better than the old man had found. Its heart had been touched.

THE WARS OF THE RILEYS

It was the night before Washington's Birthday that Mr. Riley broke loose. They will speak of it long in the Windy City as "the night of the big storm," and with good right—it was "that suddint and fierce," just like Mr. Riley himself in his berserker moods. Mr. Riley was one of the enlivening problems of "the Bureau" in the region back of the stock-yards that kept it from being dulled by the routine of looking after the poor. He was more: he rose to the dignity of a "cause" at uncertain intervals when the cost of living, underpay and overtime, sickness and death, overpopulation, and all the other well-worn props of poverty retired to the wings and left the stage to Mr. Riley rampant, sufficient for the time and as informing as a whole course at the School of Philanthropy. In between, Mr. Riley was a capable meat-cutter earning good wages, who wouldn't have done a neighbor out of a cent that was his due, a robust citizen with more than his share of good looks, a devoted husband and a doting father, inseparable when at home from little Mike, whose baby trick of squaring off and offering to "bust his father's face" was the pride of the block.

"Will yez look at de kid? Ain't he a foine one?" shouted Mr. Riley, with peals of laughter; and the men smoking their pipes at the fence set the youngster on with admiring taunts. Mike was just turned three. His great stunt, when his father was not at hand,

was to fall off everything in sight. Daily alarms brought from the relief party of hurrying mothers the unvarying cry, "Who's got hurt? Is it Mike?" But only Mike's feelings were hurt. Doleful howls, as he hove in sight, convoyed and comforted by Kate, aged seven, gave abundant proof that in wind and limb he was all that could be desired.

This was Mr. Riley in his hours of ease and domesticity. Mr. Riley rampant was a very different person. His arrival was invariably heralded by the smashing of the top of the kitchen stove, followed by the summary ejection of the once beloved family, helter-skelter, from the tenement. Three times the Bureau had been at the expense of having the stove top mended to keep the little Rileys from starving and freezing at once, and it was looking forward with concern to the meat-cutter's next encounter with his grievance. For there was a psychological reason for the manner of his outbreaks. The Rileys had once had a boarder, when Kate was a baby. He happened to be Mrs. Riley's brother, and he left, presuming on the kinship, without paying his board. As long as the meat-cutter was sober he remembered only the pleasant comradeship with his brother-in-law, and extended the hospitality of a neighborly fireside to his wife's relations. But no sooner had he taken a drink or two than the old grievance loomed large, and grew, as he went on, into a capital injury, to be avenged upon all and everything that in any way recalled the monstrous wrong of his life. That the cooking-stove should come first was natural, from his point of view. Upon it had been

prepared the felonious meals, by it he had smoked the pipe of peace with the false friend. The crash in the kitchen had become the unvarying signal for the hasty exit of the rest of the family and the organizing of Kate into a scouting party to keep Mrs. Riley and the Bureau informed about the progress of events in the house where the meat-cutter raged alone.

Mrs. Riley was a loyal, if not always a patient, woman—who can blame her?—and accepted the situation as part of the marital compact, clearly comprehended, perhaps foreshadowed, in her vow to cling to her husband “for better for worse,” and therefore not to be questioned. In times of peace she remembered not the days of storm and stress. Once indeed, when her best gingham had been sacrificed to the furies of war, she had considered whether the indefinite multiplication of the tribe of Riley were in the long run desirable, and had put it to the young woman from the Bureau, who was superintending the repair of the stove top, this way: “I am thinking, Miss Kane, if I will live with Mr. Riley any longer; would you?”—to the blushing confusion of that representative of the social order. However, that crisis passed. Mr. Riley took the pledge for the fourth or fifth time, and the next day appeared at the office, volunteering to assign himself and his earnings to the Bureau for the benefit of his wife and his creditors, reserving only enough for luncheons and tobacco, but nothing for drinks. The Bureau took an hour off to recover from the shock. If it had misgivings, it refused to listen to them. The world had turned a corner in the city by the lake and was on the

home-stretch: Mr. Riley had reformed.

And, in truth, so it seemed. For once he was as good as his word. Christmas passed, and the manifold temptations of New Year, with Mike and his father still chums. Kate was improving the chance to profit by the school-learning so fatally interrupted in other days. Seventeen weeks went by with Mr. Riley's wages paid in at the Bureau every Saturday; the grocer smiled a fat welcome to the Riley children, the clock man and the spring man and the other installment collectors had ceased to be importunate. Mrs. Riley was having blissful visions of a new spring hat. Life back of the stock-yards was in a way of becoming ordinary and slow, when the fatal twenty-second of February hove in sight.

The night before, Mr. Riley, quitting work, met a friend at the gate, who, pitying his penniless state, informed him that "there was the price of a drink at the corner" for him, meaning at Quinlan's saloon. Now this was prodding the meat-cutter in a tender spot. He hated waste as much as his employers, who proverbially exploited all of the pig but the squeal. He didn't want the drink, but to have it waiting there with no one to come for it was wicked waste. It was his clear duty to save it, and he did. Among those drinking at the bar were some of his fellow-workmen, who stood treat. That called for a return, and Riley's credit was good. It was late before the party broke up; it was 3 a.m. when the meat-cutter burst into the tenement, roaring drunk, clamoring for the lives of brothers-in-law in general and

that of his own in particular, and smashed the stove lids with crash after crash that aroused the slumbering household with a jerk.

For once it was caught napping. The long peace had bred a fatal sense of security. Kate was off scouting duty and Mrs. Riley had her hands full with Pat, Bridget, and the baby all having measles at once—too full to take warning from her husband's suspicious absence at bedtime. Roused in the middle of the night to the defense of her brood, she fought gallantly, but without hope. The battle was bloody and brief. Beaten and bruised, she gathered up her young and fled into the blinding storm to the house of a pitying neighbor, who took them in, measles and all, to snuggle up with his own while he mounted guard on the doorstep against any pursuing enemy. But the meat-cutter merely slammed the door upon his evicted family. He spent the rest of the night smashing the reminders of his brother-in-law's hated kin. Kate, reconnoitering at daybreak, brought back word that he was raging around the house with three other drunken men. The opening of the Bureau found her encamped on the doorstep with a demand that help come quickly—the worst had happened. "Has little Mike broken his neck?" they asked in breathless chorus. "Worse nor that," she panted; "do be comin', Miss Kane!"

"Oh, what is it? Are any of the children dead?"

"Worse nor that; Mr. Riley has broke loose!" Kate always spoke of her father in his tantrums as Mister, as if he were a doubtful acquaintance. Her story of the night's doings was

so lurid that the intimacy of many a *post-bellum* remorse felt unequal to the strain, and Miss Kane commandeered a policeman on the way to the house. The meat-cutter received her with elaborate inebriate courtesy, loftily ignoring the officer.

“Who is he?” he asked, aside.

She tried evasion. “A friend of mine I met.” She was sorry immediately.

“Is he that? Then he is no friend of mine. Oh, Miss Kane,” he grieved, “why did you go for to get him? You know I’d have protected you!” This with an indignant scowl at his fellow-marauders, who were furtively edging toward the door. An inquest of the house showed the devastation of war. The kitchen was a wreck; the bedroom furniture smashed; the Morris chair in which the family of young Rileys had reveled in the measles lay in splinters. “It was so hot here last night,” suggested the meat-cutter, gravely, “it must have fell to pieces.” In the course of the inspection Mrs. Riley appeared, keeping close to the policeman, wrathful and fearful at once, with a wondrous black eye. Her husband regarded it with expert interest and ventured the reflection that it was a shame, and she the fine-looking woman that she was! At that Mrs. Riley edged away toward her husband and eyed the bluecoat with hostile looks.

Between crying and laughing, “the Bureau lady” dismissed the policeman and officiated at the reunion of the family on condition that the meat-cutter appear at the office and get the dressing down which he so richly deserved, which he did. But his

dignity had been offended by the brass buttons, and he insisted upon its being administered by one of his own sex.

“I like her,” he explained, indicating Miss Kane with reproving forefinger, “but she’s gone back on me.” Another grievance had been added to that of the unpaid board.

The peace that was made lasted just ten days, when Mr. Riley broke loose once more, and this time he was brought into court. The whole Bureau went along to tell the story of the compact and the manner of its breaking. Mr. Riley listened attentively to the recital of the black record.

“What have you to say to this?” scowled the Judge. The prisoner nodded.

“It is all true what the lady says, your Honor; she put it fair.”

“I have a good mind to send you to Bridewell to break stone.”

“Don’t do that, Judge, and lose me job. I want to be wid me family.” Mrs. Riley looked imploringly at the bench. His Honor’s glance took in her face with the family group.

“Looks like it,” he mused; but in the end he agreed to hand him over to the Bureau for one more trial, first administering the pledge in open court. Mr. Riley took the oath with great solemnity and entire good faith, kissed the Bible with a smack, reached up a large red fist for the Judge to shake, and the clerk. Then he pledged lasting friendship to the whole Bureau, including Miss Kane, whom he generously forgave the wrong she had done him, presented little Mike to the Court as “de foinest kid in de ward,” took the gurgling baby from Mrs. Riley and

gallantly gave her his arm. Leaning fondly upon it, a little lame and sore yet from the fight and with one eye in deep mourning, she turned a proudly hopeful look upon her husband, like a rainbow spanning a black departing cloud. And thus, with fleet-footed Kate in the van proclaiming the peace, and three prattling children clinging to their hands and clothes, they passed out into life to begin it anew. And bench and Bureau, with sudden emotion, hopelessly irrational and altogether hopeful and good, cheered them on their way.

LIFE'S BEST GIFT

Margaret Kelly is dead, and I need not scruple to call her by her own name. For it is certain that she left no kin to mourn her. She did all the mourning herself in her lifetime, and better than that when there was need. She nursed her impetuous Irish father and her gentle English mother in their old age—like the loving daughter she was—and, last of all, her only sister. When she had laid them away, side by side, she turned to face the world alone, undaunted, with all the fighting grit of her people from both sides of the Channel. If troubles came upon her for which she was no match, it can be truly said that she went down fighting. And who of her blood would ask for more?

What I have set down here is almost as much as any one ever heard about her people. She was an old woman when she came in a way of figuring in these pages, and all that lay behind her.

Of her own past this much was known: that she had once been an exceedingly prosperous designer of dresses, with a brown-stone house on Lexington Avenue, and some of the city's wealthiest women for her customers. Carriages with liveried footmen were not rarely seen at her door, and a small army of seamstresses worked out her plans. Her sister was her bookkeeper and the business head of the house. Fair as it seemed, it proved a house of cards, and with the sister's death it fell. One loss followed another. Margaret Kelly knew nothing of money

or the ways of business. She lost the house, and with it her fine clients. For a while she made her stand in a flat with the most faithful of her sewing-women to help her. But that also had to go when more money went out than came in and nothing was left for the landlord. Younger rivals crowded her out. She was stamped "old-fashioned," and that was the end of it. Her last friend left her. Worry and perplexity made her ill, and while she was helpless in Bellevue Hospital, being in a ward with no "next friend" on the books, they sent her over to the Island with the paupers. Against this indignity her proud spirit arose and made the body forget its ills. She dragged herself down to the boat that took her back to the city, only to find that her last few belongings were gone, the little hall room she had occupied in a house in Twenty-ninth Street locked against her, and she, at seventy-five, on the street, penniless, and without one who cared for her in all the world.

Yes, there was one. A dressmaker who had known her in happier days saw from her window opposite Father McGlynn's church a white-haired woman seek shelter within the big storm-doors night after night in the bitter cold of midwinter, and recognized in her the once proud and prosperous Miss Kelly. Shocked and grieved, she went to the district office of the Charities with money to pay for shelter and begged them to take the old lady in charge and save her from want.

And what a splendid old lady she was! Famished with the hunger of weeks and months, but with pride undaunted, straight

as an arrow under the burden of heavy years, she met the visitor with all the dignity of a queen. The deep lines of suffering in her face grew deeper as she heard her message. She drew the poor black alpaca about her with a gesture as if she were warding off a blow: "Why," she asked, "should any one intrude upon her to offer aid? She had not asked for anything, and was not—" she faltered a bit, but went on resolutely—"did not want anything."

"Not work?" asked her caller, gently. "Would you not like me to find some work for you?"

A sudden light came into the old eyes. "Work—yes, if she could get that—" And then the reserve of the long, lonely years broke down. She buried her face in her hands and wept.

They found her a place to sew in a house where she was made welcome as one of the family. For all that, she went reluctantly. All her stubborn pride went down before the kindness of these strangers. She was afraid that her hand had lost its cunning, that she could not do justice to what was asked of her, and she stipulated that she should receive only a dollar for her day's work, if she could earn that. When her employer gave her the dollar at the end of the day, the look that came into her face made that woman turn quickly to hide her tears.

The worst of Margaret Kelly's hardships were over. She had a roof over her head, and an "address." If she starved, that was her affair. And slowly she opened her heart to her new friends and gave them room there. I have a letter of that day from one of them that tells how they were getting on: "She has a little

box of a room where she almost froze all winter. A window right over her bed and no heat. But she is a great old soldier and never whines. Occasionally she comes to see me, and I give her something to eat, but what she does between times God alone knows. When I give her a little change, she goes to the bake-shop, but I think otherwise goes without and pretends she is not hungry. A business man who knows her told her if she needed nourishment to let him know; she said she did not need anything. Her face looks starvation. When she was ill in the winter, I tried to get her into a hospital; but she would not go, and no wonder. If she had only a couple of dollars a week she could get along, as I could get her clothing. She wears black for her sister.”

The couple of dollars were found and the hunger was banished with the homelessness. Margaret Kelly had two days’ work every week, and in the feeling that she could support herself once more new life came to her. She was content.

So two years passed. In the second summer the old woman, now nearing eighty, was sent out in the country for a vacation of five or six weeks. She came back strong and happy; the rest and the peace had sunk into her soul. “Some of the tragedy has gone out of her face,” her friend wrote to me. She was looking forward with courage to taking up her work again when what seemed an unusual opportunity came her way. A woman who knew her story was going abroad, leaving her home up near Riverside Drive in charge of a caretaker. She desired a companion for her, and offered the place to Miss Kelly. It was so much better a prospect

than the cold and cheerless hall room that her friends advised her to accept, and Margaret Kelly moved into the luxurious stone house uptown, and once more was warmly and snugly housed for the winter with congenial company.

Man proposes and God disposes. Along in February came a deadly cold spell. The thermometer fell below zero. In the worst of it Miss Kelly's friend from the "office," happening that way, rang the bell to inquire how she was getting on. No one answered. She knocked at the basement door, but received no reply. Concluding that the two women were in an upper story out of hearing of the bell, she went away, and on her return later in the day tried again, with no better success. It was too cold for the people in the house to be out, and her suspicions were aroused. She went to the police station and returned with help. The door was forced and the house searched. In the kitchen they found the two old women sitting dead by the stove, one with her head upon the other's shoulder. The fire had long been out and their bodies were frozen. There was plenty of fuel in the house. Apparently they had shut off the draught to save coal and raised the lid of the stove, perhaps to enjoy the glow of the fire in the gloaming. The escaping gas had put them both to sleep before they knew their peril.

So the police and the coroner concluded. "Two friends," said the official report. Margaret Kelly had found more than food and shelter. Life at the last had given her its best gift, and her hungry old heart was filled.

DRIVEN FROM HOME

“Doctor, what shall I do? My father wants me to tend bar on Sunday. I am doing it nights, but Sunday—I don’t want to. What shall I do?”

The pastor of Olivet Church looked kindly at the lad who stood before him, cap in hand. The last of the Sunday-school had trailed out; the boy had waited for this opportunity. Dr. Schauffler knew and liked him as one of his bright boys. He knew, too, his home—the sordid, hard-fisted German father and his patient, long-suffering mother.

“What do you think yourself, Karl?”

“I don’t want to, Doctor. I know it is wrong.”

“All right then, don’t.”

“But he will kick me out and never take me back. He told me so, and he’ll do it.”

“Well—”

The boy’s face flushed. At fourteen, to decide between home and duty is not easy. And there was his mother. Knowing him, the Doctor let him fight it out alone. Presently he squared his shoulders as one who has made his choice.

“I can’t help it if he does,” he said; “it isn’t right to ask me.”

“If he does, come straight here. Good-by!”

Sunday night the door-bell of the pastor’s study rang sharply. The Doctor laid down his book and answered it himself. On the

threshold stood Karl with a small bundle done up in a bandana handkerchief.

“Well, I am fired,” he said.

“Come in, then. I’ll see you through.”

The boy brought in his bundle. It contained a shirt, three collars, and a pair of socks, hastily gathered up in his retreat. The Doctor hefted it.

“Going light,” he smiled. “Men fight better for it sometimes. Great battles have been won without baggage trains.”

The boy looked soberly at his all.

“I have got to win now, Doctor. Get me a job, will you?”

Things moved swiftly with Karl from that Sunday. Monday morning saw him at work as errand-boy in an office, earning enough for his keep at the boarding-house where his mother found him at times when his father was alone keeping bar. That night he registered at the nearest evening school to complete his course. The Doctor kept a grip on his studies, as he had promised, and saw him through. It was not easy sledding, but it was better than the smelly saloon. From the public school he graduated into the Cooper Institute, where his teachers soon took notice of the wide-awake lad. Karl was finding himself. He took naturally to the study of languages, and threw himself into it with all the ardor of an army marching without baggage train to meet an enemy. He had “got to win,” and he did. All the while he earned his living working as a clerk by day—with very little baggage yet to boast of—and sitting up nights with his books. When he graduated

from the Institute, the battle was half won.

The other half he fought on his own ground, with the enemy's tents in sight. His attainments procured for him a place in the Lenox Library, where his opportunity for reading was limited only by his ambition. He made American history and literature his special study, and in the course of time achieved great distinction in his field. "And they were married and lived happily ever after" might by right be added to his story. He did marry an East Side girl who had been his sweetheart while he was fighting his uphill battle, and they have to-day two daughters attending college.

It is the drawback to these stories that, being true, they must respect the privacy of their heroes. If that were not so, I should tell you that this hero's name is not Karl, but one much better befitting his fight and his victory; that he was chosen historian of his home State, and held the office with credit until spoils politics thrust him aside, and that he lives to-day in the capital city of another State, an authority whose word is not lightly questioned on any matter pertaining to Americana. That is the record of the East Side boy who was driven from home for refusing to tend bar in his father's saloon on Sunday because it was not right.

He never saw his father again. He tried more than once, but the door of his home was barred against him. Not with his mother's consent; in long after years, when once again Dr. Schauffler preached at Olivet, a little German woman came up after the sermon and held out her hand to him.

“You made my Karl a man,” she said.

“No,” replied the preacher, soberly, “God made him.”

THE PROBLEM OF THE WIDOW SALVINI

The mere mention of the widow Salvini always brings before me that other widow who came to our settlement when her rascal husband was dead after beating her black and blue through a lifetime in Poverty Gap, during which he did his best to make ruffians of the boys and worse of the girls by driving them out into the street to earn money to buy him rum whenever he was not on the Island, which, happily, he was most of the time. I know I had a hand in sending him there nineteen times, more shame to the judge whom I finally had to threaten with public arraignment and the certainty of being made an accessory to wife-murder unless he found a way of keeping him there. He did then, and it was during his long term that the fellow died. What I started to say was that, when all was over and he out of the way, his widow came in and wanted our advice as to whether she ought to wear mourning earrings in his memory. Without rhyme or reason the two are associated in my mind, for they were as different as could be. The widow of Poverty Gap was Irish and married to a brute. Mrs. Salvini was an Italian; her husband was a hard-working fellow who had the misfortune to be killed on the railway. The point of contact is in the earrings. The widow Salvini did wear mourning earrings, a little piece of crape draped

over the gold bangles of her care-free girlhood, and it was not funny but infinitely touching. It just shows how little things do twist one's mind.

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