

# JACOB AUGUST RIIS

THE MAKING OF AN  
AMERICAN

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*The Making of an American:*

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# **Jacob A. Riis**

## **The Making of an American**

### **CHAPTER I**

#### **THE MEETING ON THE LONG BRIDGE**

On the outskirts of the ancient town of Ribe, on the Danish north seacoast, a wooden bridge spanned the Nibs River when I was a boy—a frail structure, with twin arches like the humps of a dromedary, for boats to go under. Upon it my story begins. The bridge is long since gone. The grass-grown lane that knew our romping feet leads nowhere now. But in my memory it is all as it was that day nearly forty years ago, and it is always summer there. The bees are droning among the forget-me-nots that grow along shore, and the swans arch their necks in the limpid stream. The clatter of the mill-wheel down at the dam comes up with drowsy hum; the sweet smells of meadow and field are in the air. On the bridge a boy and a girl have met.

He whistles a tune, boy-fashion, with worsted jacket slung across his arm, on his way home from the carpenter shop to his midday meal. When she has passed he stands looking after her, all the music gone out of him. At the other end of the bridge she

turns with the feeling that he is looking, and, when she sees that he is, goes on with a little toss of her pretty head. As she stands one brief moment there with the roguish look, she is to stand in his heart forever—a sweet girlish figure, in jacket of gray, black-embroidered, with schoolbooks and pretty bronzed boots—

"With tassels!" says my wife, maliciously—she has been looking over my shoulder. Well, with tassels! What then? Did I not worship a pair of boots with tassels which I passed in a shop window in Copenhagen every day for a whole year, because they were the only other pair I ever saw? I don't know—there may have been more; perhaps others wore them. I know she did. Curls she had, too—curls of yellow gold. Why do girls not have curls these days? It is such a rare thing to see them, that when you do you feel like walking behind them miles and miles just to feast your eyes. Too much bother, says my daughter. Bother? Why, I have carried one of your mother's, miss! all these—there, I shall not say how long—and carry it still. Bother? Great Scott!

And is this going to be a love story, then? Well, I have turned it over and over, and looked at it from every angle, but if I am to tell the truth, as I promised, I don't see how it can be helped. If I am to do that, I must begin at the Long Bridge. I stepped on it that day a boy, and came off it with the fixed purpose of a man. How I stuck to it is part of the story—the best part, to my thinking; and I ought to know, seeing that our silver wedding comes this March. Silver wedding, humph! She isn't a week older than the day I married her—not a week. It was all in the way

of her that I came here; though at the time I am speaking of I rather guessed than knew it was Elizabeth. She lived over there beyond the bridge. We had been children together. I suppose I had seen her a thousand times before without noticing. In school I had heard the boys trading in her for marbles and brass buttons as a partner at dances and games—generally trading off the other girls for her. She was such a pretty dancer! I was not. "Soldiers and robbers" was more to my taste. That any girl, with curls or without, should be worth a good marble, or a regimental button with a sound eye, that could be strung, was rank foolishness to me until that day on the bridge.

And now I shall have to recross it after all, to tell who and what we were, that we may start fair. I shall have to go slow, too, for back of that day everything seems very indistinct and strange. A few things stand out more clearly than the rest. The day, for instance, when I was first dragged off to school by an avenging housemaid and thrust howling into an empty hogshead by the ogre of a schoolmarm, who, when she had put the lid on, gnashed her yellow teeth at the bunghole and told me that so bad boys were dealt with in school. At recess she had me up to the pig-pen in the yard as a further warning. The pig had a slit in the ear. It was for being lazy, she explained, and showed me the shears. Boys were no better than pigs. Some were worse; then—a jab at the air with the scissors told the rest. Poor father! He was a schoolmaster, too; how much sorrow it might have spared him had he known of this! But we were too scared to tell, I suppose.

He had set his heart upon my taking up his calling, and I hated the school from the day I first saw it. Small wonder. The only study he succeeded in interesting me in was English, because Charles Dickens's paper, *All the Year Round*, came to the house with stories ever so much more alluring than the tedious grammar. He was of the old dispensation, wedded to the old ways. But the short cut I took to knowledge in that branch I think opened his eyes to some things ahead of his time. Their day had not yet come. He lived to see it dawn and was glad. I know how he felt about it. I myself have lived down the day of the hogshead in the child-life of New York. Some of the schools our women made an end of a few years ago weren't much better. To help clean them out was like getting square with the ogre that plagued my childhood.

I mind, too, my first collision with the tenement. There was just one, and it stood over against the castle hill, separated from it only by the dry moat. We called it Rag Hall, and I guess it deserved the name. Ribe was a very old town. Five hundred years ago or so it had been the seat of the fighting kings, when Denmark was a power to be reckoned with. There they were handy when trouble broke out with the German barons to the south. But the times changed, and of all its greatness there remained to Ribe only its famed cathedral, with eight centuries upon its hoary head, and its Latin School. Of the castle of the Valdemars there was left only this green hill with solemn sheep browsing upon it and ba-a-a-ing into the sunset. In the moats, where once ships sailed in from the sea, great billowy masses

of reeds ever bent and swayed under the west wind that swept over the meadows. They grew much taller than our heads, and we boys loved to play in them, to track the tiger or the grizzly to its lair, not without creeping shudders at the peril that might lie in ambush at the next turn; or, hidden deep down among them, we lay and watched the white clouds go overhead and listened to the reeds whispering of the great days and deeds that were.

The castle hill was the only high ground about the town. It was said in some book of travel that one might see twenty-four miles in any direction from Ribe, lying flat on one's back; but that was drawing the long bow. Flat the landscape was, undeniably. From the top of the castle hill we could see the sun setting upon the sea, and the islands lying high in fine weather, as if floating in the air, the Nibs winding its silvery way through the green fields. Not a tree, hardly a house, hindered the view. It was grass, all grass, for miles, to the sand dunes and the beach. Strangers went into ecstasy over the little woodland patch down by the Long Bridge, and very sweet and pretty it was; but to me, who was born there, the wide view to the sea, the green meadows, with the lonesome flight of the shore-birds and the curlew's call in the night-watches, were dearer far, with all their melancholy. More than mountains in their majesty; more, infinitely more, than the city of teeming millions with all its wealth and might, they seem to me to typify human freedom and the struggle for it. Thence came the vikings that roved the seas, serving no man as master; and through the dark ages of feudalism no lord long bent the neck



of those stout yeomen to the yoke. Germany, forgetting honor, treaties, and history, is trying to do it now in Slesvig, south of the Nibs, and she will as surely fail. The day of long-delayed justice, when dynasties by the grace of God shall have been replaced by government by right of the people, will find them unconquered still.

Alas! I am afraid that thirty years in the land of my children's birth have left me as much of a Dane as ever. I no sooner climb the castle hill than I am fighting tooth and nail the hereditary foes of my people whom it was built high to bar. Yet, would you have it otherwise? What sort of a husband is the man going to make who begins by pitching his old mother out of the door to make room for his wife? And what sort of a wife would she be to ask or to stand it?

But I was speaking of the tenement by the moat. It was a ramshackle, two-story affair with shiftless tenants and ragged children. Looking back now, I think likely it was the contrast of its desolation with the green hill and the fields I loved, of its darkness and human misery and inefficiency with the valiant fighting men of my boyish dreams, that so impressed me. I believe it because it is so now. Over against the tenement that we fight in our cities ever rises in my mind the fields, the woods, God's open sky, as accuser and witness that His temple is being so defiled, man so dwarfed in body and soul.

I know that Rag Hall displeased me very much. I presume there must have been something of an inquiring Yankee twist to

my make-up, for the boys called me "Jacob the delver," mainly because of my constant bothering with the sewerage of our house, which was of the most primitive kind. An open gutter that was full of rats led under the house to the likewise open gutter of the street. That was all there was of it, and very bad it was; but it had always been so, and as, consequently, it could not be otherwise, my energies spent themselves in unending warfare with those rats, whose nests choked the gutter. I could hardly have been over twelve or thirteen when Rag Hall challenged my resentment. My methods in dealing with it had at least the merit of directness, if they added nothing to the sum of human knowledge or happiness. I had received a "mark," which was a coin like our silver quarter, on Christmas Eve, and I hied myself to Rag Hall at once to divide it with the poorest family there, on the express condition that they should tidy up things, especially those children, and generally change their way of living. The man took the money—I have a vague recollection of seeing a stunned look on his face—and, I believe, brought it back to our house to see if it was all right, thereby giving me great offence. But he did the best for himself that way, for so Rag Hall came under the notice of my mother too. And there really was some whitewashing done, and the children were cleaned up for a season. So that the eight skilling were, if not wisely, yet well invested, after all.

No doubt Christmas had something to do with it. Poverty and misery always seem to jar more at the time when the whole world

makes merry. We took an entire week off to keep Christmas in. Till after New Year's Day no one thought of anything else. The "Holy Eve" was the greatest of the year. Then the Domkirke shone with a thousand wax candles that made the gloom in the deep recesses behind the granite pillars seem deeper still, and brought out the picture of the Virgin Mary and her child, long hidden under the whitewash of the Reformation, and so preserved to our day by the very means taken to destroy it. The people sang the dear old hymns about the child cradled in the manger, and mother's tears fell in her hymn-book. Dear old mother! She had a house full, and little enough to manage with; but never one went hungry or unhelped from her door. I am a believer in organized, systematic charity upon the evidence of my senses; but—I am glad we have that one season in which we can forget our principles and err on the side of mercy, that little corner in the days of the dying year for sentiment and no questions asked. No need to be afraid. It is safe. Christmas charity never corrupts. Love keeps it sweet and good—the love He brought into the world at Christmas to temper the hard reason of man. Let it loose for that little spell. January comes soon enough with its long cold. Always it seems to me the longest month in the year. It is so far to another Christmas!

To say that Ribe was an old town hardly describes it to readers at this day. A town might be old and yet have kept step with time. In my day Ribe had not. It had never changed its step or its ways since whale-oil lanterns first hung in iron chains across

its cobblestone-paved streets to light them at night. There they hung yet, every rusty link squeaking dolefully in the wind that never ceased blowing from the sea. Coal-oil, just come from America, was regarded as a dangerous innovation. I remember buying a bottle of "Pennsylvania oil" at the grocer's for eight skilling, as a doubtful domestic experiment. Steel pens had not crowded out the old-fashioned goose-quill, and pen-knives meant just what their name implies. Matches were yet of the future. We carried tinder-boxes to strike fire with. People shook their heads at the telegraph. The day of the stage-coach was not yet past. Steamboat and railroad had not come within forty miles of the town, and only one steam factory—a cotton mill that was owned by Elizabeth's father. At the time of the beginning of my story, he, having made much money during the early years of the American war through foresight in having supplied himself with cotton, was building another and larger, and I helped to put it up. Of progress and enterprise he held an absolute monopoly in Ribe, and though he employed more than half of its working force, it is not far from the truth that he was unpopular on that account. It could not be well otherwise in a town whose militia company yet drilled with flint-lock muskets. Those we had in the school for the use of the big boys—dreadful old blunderbusses of the pre-Napoleonic era—were of the same pattern. I remember the fright that seized our worthy rector when the German army was approaching in the winter of 1863, and the haste they made to pack them all up in a box and send them out to be sunk in

the deep, lest they fall into the hands of the enemy; and the consternation that sat upon their faces when they saw the Prussian needle-guns.

The watchmen still cried the hour at night They do, for that matter, yet. The railroad came to town and the march of improvement struck it, after I had gone away. Century-old institutions were ruthlessly upset. The police force, which in my boyhood consisted of a man and a half—that is, one with a wooden leg—was increased and uniformed, and the night watchmen's chant was stopped. But there are limits to everything. The town that had been waked every hour of the night since the early Middle Ages to be told that it slept soundly, could not possibly take a night's rest without it. It lay awake dreading all sorts of unknown disasters. Universal insomnia threatened it; and within a month, on petition of the entire community, the council restored the songsters, and they squeak to this day. This may sound like exaggeration; but it is not. It is a faithful record of what took place and stands so upon the official minutes of the municipality.

When I was in Denmark last year, I looked over some of those old reports, and had more than one melancholy laugh at the account of measures taken for the defence of Ribe at the first assault of the Germans in 1849. That was the year I was born. Ribe, being a border town on the line of the coveted territory, set about arming itself to resist invasion. The citizens built barricades in the streets—one of them, with wise forethought, in

front of the drug store, "in case any one were to faint" and stand in need of Hoffman's drops or smelling-salts. The women filled kettles with hot water in the houses flanking an eventual advance. "Two hundred pounds of powder" were ordered from the next town by foot-post, and a cannon that had stood half buried a hundred years, serving for a hitching-post, was dug up and put into commission. There being a scarcity of guns, the curate of the next village reported arming his host with spears and battle-axes as the next best thing. A rumor of a sudden advance of the enemy sent the mothers with babes in arms scurrying north for safety. My mother was among them. I was a month old at the time. Thirty years later I battled for the mastery in the police office in Mulberry Street with a reporter for the *Staats-Zeitung* whom I discovered to be one of those invaders, and I took it out of him in revenge. Old Cohen carried a Danish bullet in his arm to remind him of his early ill-doings. But it was not fired in defence of Ribe. That collapsed when a staff officer of the government, who had been sent out to report upon the zeal of the Ribe men, declared that the town could be defended only by damming the river and flooding the meadows, which would cost two hundred daler. The minutes of the council represent that that was held to be too great a price to pay for the privilege of being sacked, perhaps, as a captured town; and the citizen army disbanded.

If the coming of the invading army could have been timed to suit, the sea, which from old was the bulwark of the nation, might

have completed the defences of Ribe without other expense to it than that of repairing damages. Two or three times a year, usually in the fall, when it blew long and hard from the northwest, it broke in over the low meadows and flooded the country as far as the eye could reach. Then the high causeways were the refuge of everything that lived in the fields; hares, mice, foxes, and partridges huddled there, shivering in the shower of spray that shot over the road, and making such stand as they could against the fierce blast. If the "storm flood" came early in the season, before the cattle had been housed, there was a worse story to tell. Then the town butcher went upon the causeway at daybreak with the implements of his trade to save if possible, by letting the blood, at least the meat of drowned cattle and sheep that were cast up by the sea. When it rose higher and washed over the road, the mail-coach picked its way warily between white posts set on both sides to guide it safe. We boys caught fish in the streets of the town, while red tiles flew from the roofs all about us, and we enjoyed ourselves hugely. It was part of the duty of the watchmen who cried the hours to give warning if the sea came in suddenly during the night. And when we heard it we shivered in our beds with gruesome delight.

The people of Ribe were of three classes: the officials, the tradesmen, and the working people. The bishop, the burgomaster, and the rector of the Latin School headed the first class, to which my father belonged as the senior master in the school. Elizabeth's father easily led the second class. For

the third, it had no leaders and nothing to say at that time. On state occasions lines were quite sharply drawn between the classes, but the general kindliness of the people caused them at ordinary times to be so relaxed that the difference was hardly to be noticed. Theirs was a real neighborliness that roamed unrestrained and without prejudice until brought up with a round turn at the barrier of traditional orthodoxy. I remember well one instance of that kind. There lived in our town a single family of Jews, well-to-do tradespeople, gentle and good, and socially popular. There lived also a Gentile woman of wealth, a mother in the strictly Lutheran Israel, who fed and clothed the poor and did no end of good. She was a very pious woman. It so happened that the Jewess and the Christian were old friends. But one day they strayed upon dangerous ground. The Jewess saw it and tried to turn the conversation from the forbidden topic.

"Well, dear friend," she said, soothingly, "some day, when we meet in heaven, we shall all know better."

The barrier was reached. Her friend fairly bristled as she made reply:

"What! Our heaven? No, indeed! We may be good friends here, Mrs—, but there—really, you will have to excuse me."

Narrow streams are apt to run deep. An incident which I set down in justice to the uncompromising orthodoxy of that day, made a strong impression on me. The two concerned in it were my uncle, a generous, bright, even a brilliant man, but with no great bump of reverence, and the deacon in the village



church where they lived. He was the exact opposite of my uncle: hard, unlovely, but deeply religious. The two were neighbors and quarrelled about their fence-line. For months they did not speak. On Sunday the deacon strode by on his way to church, and my uncle, who stayed home, improved the opportunity to point out of what stuff those Pharisees were made, much to his own edification. Easter week came. In Denmark it is, or was, custom to go to communion once a year, on Holy Thursday, if at no other season, and, I might add, rarely at any other. On Wednesday night, the deacon appeared, unbidden, at my uncle's door, craving an interview. If a spectre had suddenly walked in, I do not suppose he could have lost his wits more completely. He recovered them with an effort, and bidding his guest welcome, led him courteously to his office.

From that interview he came forth a changed man. Long years after I heard the full story of it from my uncle's own lips. It was simple enough. The deacon said that duty called him to the communion table on the morrow, and that he could not reconcile it with his conscience to go with hate toward his neighbor in his heart. Hence he had come to tell him that he might have the line as he claimed it. The spark struck fire. Then and there they made up and were warm friends, though agreeing in nothing, till they died. "The faith," said my uncle in telling of it, "that could work in that way upon such a nature, is not to be made light of." And he never did after that. He died a believing man.

It may be that it contributed something to the ordinarily

democratic relations of the upper-class men and the tradespeople that the latter were generally well-to-do, while the officials mostly had a running fight of it with their incomes. My father's salary had to reach around to a family of fourteen, nay, fifteen, for he took his dead sister's child when a baby and brought her up with us, who were boys all but one. Father had charge of the Latin form, and this, with a sense of grim humor, caused him, I suppose, to check his children off with the Latin numerals, as it were. The sixth was baptized Sextus, the ninth Nonus, though they were not called so, and he was dissuaded from calling the twelfth Duodecimus only by the certainty that the other boys would miscall him "Dozen." How I escaped Tertius I don't know. Probably the scheme had not been thought of then. Poor father! Of the whole fourteen but one lived to realize his hopes of a professional career, only to die when he had just graduated from the medical school. My oldest brother went to sea; Sophus, the doctor, was the next; and I, when it came my time to study in earnest, refused flatly and declared my wish to learn the carpenter's trade. Not till thirty years after did I know how deep the wound was I struck my father then. He had set his heart upon my making a literary career, and though he was very far from lacking sympathy with the workingman—I rather think that he was the one link between the upper and lower strata in our town in that way, enjoying the most hearty respect of both—yet it was a sad disappointment to him. It was in 1893, when I saw him for the last time, that I found it out, by a chance remark he

dropped when sitting with my first book, "How the Other Half Lives," in his hand, and also the sacrifice he had made of his own literary ambitions to eke out by hack editorial work on the local newspaper a living for his large family. As for me, I would have been repaid for the labor of writing a thousand books by witnessing the pride he took in mine. There was at last a man of letters in the family, though he came by a road not down on the official map.

Crying over spilt milk was not my father's fashion, however. If I was to be a carpenter, there was a good one in town, to whom I was forthwith apprenticed for a year. During that time, incidentally, I might make up my mind, upon the evidence of my reduced standing, that school was, after all, to be preferred. And thus it was that I came to be a working boy helping build her proud father's factory at the time I fell head over heels in love with sweet Elizabeth. Certainly I had taken no easy road to the winning of my way and my bride; so reasoned the town, which presently took note of my infatuation. But, then, it laughed, there was time enough. I was fifteen and she was not thirteen. There was time enough, oh, yes! Only I did not think so. My courtship proceeded at a tumultuous pace, which first made the town laugh, then put it out of patience and made some staid matrons express the desire to box my ears soundly. It must be owned that if courting were generally done on the plan I adopted, there would be little peace and less safety all around. When she came playing among the lumber where we were working, as she

naturally would, danger dogged my steps. I carry a scar on the shin-bone made with an adze I should have been minding when I was looking after her. The forefinger on my left hand has a stiff joint. I cut that off with an axe when she was dancing on a beam close by. Though it was put on again by a clever surgeon and kept on, I have never had the use of it since. But what did a finger matter, or ten, when she was only there! Once I fell off the roof when I must crane my neck to see her go around the corner. But I hardly took note of those things, except to enlist her sympathy by posing as a wounded hero with my arm in a sling at the dancing-school which I had joined on purpose to dance with her. I was the biggest boy there, and therefore first to choose a partner, and I remember even now the snickering of the school when I went right over and took Elizabeth. She flushed angrily, but I didn't care. That was what I was there for, and I had her now. I didn't let her go again, either, though the teacher delicately hinted that we were not a good match. She was the best dancer in the school, and I was the worst. Not a good match, hey! That was as much as she knew about it.

It was at the ball that closed the dancing-school that I excited the strong desire of the matrons to box my ears by ordering Elizabeth's father off the floor when he tried to join in before midnight, the time set for the elders to take charge. I was floor committee, but how I could do such a thing passes my understanding, except on the principle laid down by Mr. Dooley that when a man is in love he is looking for fight all around. I

must have been, for they had to hold me back by main strength from running away to the army that was fighting a losing fight with two Great Powers that winter. Though I was far under age, I was a big boy, and might have passed; but the hasty retreat of our brave little band before overwhelming odds settled it. With the echoes of the scandal caused by the ball episode still ringing, I went off to Copenhagen to serve out my apprenticeship there with a great builder whose name I saw among the dead in the paper only the other day. He was ever a good friend to me.

The third day after I reached the capital, which happened to be my birthday, I had appointed a meeting with my student brother at the art exhibition in the palace of Charlottenborg. I found two stairways running up from the main entrance, and was debating in my mind which to take, when a handsome gentleman in a blue overcoat asked, with a slight foreign accent, if he could help me. I told him my trouble, and we went up together.

We walked slowly and carried on quite an animated conversation; that is to say, I did. His part of it was confined mostly to questions, which I was no way loth to answer. I told him about myself and my plans; about the old school, and about my father, whom I took it for granted he knew; for was he not the oldest teacher in the school, and the wisest, as all Ribe could testify? He listened to it all with a curious little smile, and nodded in a very pleasant and sympathetic way which I liked to see. I told him so, and that I liked the people of Copenhagen well; they seemed so kind to a stranger, and he put his hand on my arm

and patted it in a friendly manner that was altogether nice. So we arrived together at the door where the red lackey stood.

He bowed very deep as we entered, and I bowed back, and told my friend that there was an example of it; for I had never seen the man before. At which he laughed outright, and, pointing to a door, said I would find my brother in there, and bade me good-by. He was gone before I could shake hands with him; but just then my brother came up, and I forgot about him in my admiration of the pictures.

We were resting in one of the rooms an hour later, and I was going over the events of the day, telling all about the kind stranger, when in he came, and nodded, smiling at me.

"There he is," I cried, and nodded too. To my surprise, Sophus got up with a start and salaamed in haste.

"Good gracious!" he said, when the stranger was gone. "You don't mean to say he was your guide? Why, that was the King, boy!"

I was never so astonished in my life and expect never to be again. I had only known kings from Hans Christian Andersen's story books, where they always went in coronation robes, with long train and pages, and with gold crowns on their heads. That a king could go around in a blue overcoat, like any other man, was a real shock to me that I didn't get over for a while. But when I got to know more of King Christian, I liked him all the better for it. You couldn't help that anyhow. His people call him "the good king" with cause. He is that.

Speaking of Hans Christian Andersen, we boys loved him as a matter of course; for had he not told us all the beautiful stories that made the whole background of our lives? They do that yet with me, more than you would think. The little Christmas tree and the hare that made it weep by jumping over it because it was so small, belong to the things that come to stay with you always. I hear of people nowadays who think it is not proper to tell children fairy-stories. I am sorry for those children. I wonder what they will give them instead. Algebra, perhaps. Nice lot of counting machines we shall have running the century that is to come! But though we loved Andersen, we were not above playing our pranks upon him when occasion offered. In those days Copenhagen was girt about with great earthen walls, and there were beautiful walks up there under the old lindens. On moonlight nights when the smell of violets was in the air, we would sometimes meet the poet there, walking alone. Then we would string out irreverently in Indian file and walk up, cap in hand, one after another, to salute him with a deeply respectful "Good evening, Herr Professor!" That was his title. His kind face would beam with delight, and our proffered fists would be buried in the very biggest hand, it seemed to us, that mortal ever owned,—Andersen had very large hands and feet,—and we would go away gleefully chuckling and withal secretly ashamed of ourselves. He was in such evident delight at our homage.

They used to tell a story of Andersen at the time that made the whole town laugh in its sleeve, though there was not a bit of

malice in it. No one had anything but the sincerest affection for the poet in my day; his storm and stress period was then long past. He was, it was said, greatly afraid of being buried alive. So that it might not happen, he carefully pinned a paper to his blanket every night before he went to sleep, on which was written: "I guess I am only in a trance." [Footnote: In Danish: "Jeg er vist skindod." ] Needless to say, he was in no danger. When he fell into his long sleep, the whole country, for that matter the whole world, stood weeping at his bier.

Four years I dreamt away in Copenhagen while I learned my trade. The intervals when I was awake were when she came to the town on a visit with her father, or, later, to finish her education at a fashionable school. I mind the first time she came. I was at the depot, and I rode with her on the back of their coach, unknown to them. So I found out what hotel they were to stay at. I called the next day, and purposely forgot my gloves. Heaven knows where I got them from I probably borrowed them. Those were not days for gloves. Her father sent them to my address the next day with a broad hint that, having been neighborly, I needn't call again. He was getting square for the ball. But my wife says that I was never good at taking a hint, except in the way of business, as a reporter. I kept the run of her all the time she was in the city. She did not always see me, but I saw her, and that was enough. I watched her home from school in the evening, and was content, though she was escorted by a cadet with a pig-sticker at his side. He was her cousin, and had given me his word that he cared nothing about



her. He is a commodore and King Christian's Secretary of Navy now. When she was sick, I pledged my Sunday trousers for a dollar and bought her a bouquet of flowers which they teased her about until she cried and threw it away. And all the time she was getting more beautiful and more lovable. She was certainly the handsomest girl in Copenhagen, which is full of charming women.

There were long spells when she was away, and when I dreamt on undisturbed. It was during one of these that I went to the theatre with my brother to see a famous play in which an assassin tried to murder the heroine, who was asleep in an armchair. Now, this heroine was a well-known actress who looked singularly like Elizabeth. As she sat there with the long curls sweeping her graceful neck, in imminent danger of being killed, I forgot where I was, what it was, all and everything except that danger threatened Elizabeth, and sprang to my feet with a loud cry of murder, trying to make for the stage. My brother struggled to hold me back. There was a sensation in the theatre, and the play was held up while they put me out. I remember King George of Greece eying me from his box as I was being transported to the door, and the rascal murderer on the stage looking as if he had done something deserving of praise. Outside, in the cold, my brother shook me up and took me home, a sobered and somewhat crestfallen lad. But, anyhow, I don't like that kind of play. I don't see why the villain on the stage is any better than the villain on the street. There are enough of them and to spare. And think if

he *had* killed her!

The years passed, and the day came at last when, having proved my fitness, I received my certificate as a duly enrolled carpenter of the guild of Copenhagen, and, dropping my tools joyfully and in haste, made a bee-line for Ribe, where she was. I thought that I had moved with very stealthy steps toward my goal, having grown four years older than at the time I set the whole community by the ears. But it could not have been so, for I had not been twenty-four hours in town before it was all over that I had come home to propose to Elizabeth; which was annoying but true. By the same sort of sorcery the town knew in another day that she had refused me, and all the wise heads wagged and bore witness that they could have told me so. What did I, a common carpenter, want at the "castle"? That was what they called her father's house. He had other plans for his pretty daughter.

As for Elizabeth, poor child! she was not yet seventeen, and was easily persuaded that it was all wrong; she wept, and in the goodness of her gentle heart was truly sorry; and I kissed her hands and went out, my eyes brimming over with tears, feeling that there was nothing in all the wide world for me any more, and that the farther I went from her the better. So it was settled that I should go to America. Her mother gave me a picture of her and a lock of her hair, and thereby roused the wrath of the dowagers once more; for why should I be breaking my heart over Elizabeth in foreign parts, since she was not for me? Ah, but mothers know better! I lived on that picture and that curl six long years.

One May morning my own mother went to the stagecoach with me to see me off on my long journey. Father stayed home. He was ever a man who, with the tenderest of hearts, put on an appearance of great sternness lest he betray it. God rest his soul! That nothing that I have done caused him greater grief in his life than the separation that day is sweet comfort to me now. He lived to take Elizabeth to his heart, a beloved daughter. For me, I had been that morning, long before the sun rose, under her window to bid her good-by, but she did not know it. The servants did, though, and told her of it when she got up. And she, girl-like, said, "Well, I didn't ask him to come;" but in her secret soul I think there was a small regret that she did not see me go.

So I went out in the world to seek my fortune, the richer for some \$40 which Ribe friends had presented to me, knowing that I had barely enough to pay my passage over in the steerage. Though I had aggravated them in a hundred ways and wholly disturbed the peace of the old town, I think they liked me a little, anyway. They were always good, kind neighbors, honest and lovable folk. I looked back with my mother's blessing yet in my ears, to where the gilt weather-vanes glistened on her father's house, and the tears brimmed over again. And yet, such is life, presently I felt my heart bound with a new courage. All was not lost yet. The world was before me. But yesterday the chance befell that, in going to communion in the old Domkirke, I knelt beside her at the altar rail. I thought of that and dried my eyes. God is good. He did not lay it up against me. When next

we met there, we knelt to be made man and wife, for better or worse; blessedly, gloriously for better, forever and aye, and all our troubles were over. For had we not one another?

## CHAPTER II

# I LAND IN NEW YORK AND TAKE A HAND IN THE GAME

The steamer *Iowa*, from Glasgow, made port, after a long and stormy voyage, on Whitsunday, 1870. She had come up during the night, and cast anchor off Castle Garden. It was a beautiful spring morning, and as I looked over the rail at the miles of straight streets, the green heights of Brooklyn, and the stir of ferryboats and pleasure craft on the river, my hopes rose high that somewhere in this teeming hive there would be a place for me. What kind of a place I had myself no clear notion of. I would let that work out as it could. Of course I had my trade to fall back on, but I am afraid that is all the use I thought of putting it to. The love of change belongs to youth, and I meant to take a hand in things as they came along. I had a pair of strong hands, and stubbornness enough to do for two; also a strong belief that in a free country, free from the dominion of custom, of caste, as well as of men, things would somehow come right in the end, and a man get shaken into the corner where he belonged if he took a hand in the game. I think I was right in that. If it took a lot of shaking to get me where I belonged, that was just what I needed. Even my mother admits that now. To tell the truth, I was tired of hammer and saw. They were indissolubly bound up with my

dreams of Elizabeth that were now gone to smash. Therefore I hated them. And straightway, remembering that the day was her birthday, and accepting the fact as a good omen, I rebuilt my air-castles and resolved to try on a new tack. So irrational is human nature at twenty-one, when in love. And isn't it good that it is?

In all of which I have made no account of a factor which is at the bottom of half our troubles with our immigrant population, so far as they are not of our own making: the loss of reckoning that follows uprooting; the cutting loose from all sense of responsibility, with the old standards gone, that makes the politician's job so profitable in our large cities, and that of the patriot and the housekeeper so wearisome. We all know the process. The immigrant has no patent on it. It afflicts the native, too, when he goes to a town where he is not known. In the slum it reaches its climax in the second generation, and makes of the Irishman's and the Italian's boys the "toughs" who fight the battles of Hell's Kitchen and Frog Hollow. It simply means that we are creatures of environment, that a man everywhere is largely what his neighbors and his children think him to be, and that government makes for our moral good too, dreamers and anarchists to the contrary notwithstanding. But, simple as it is, it has been too long neglected for the safety of the man and of the State. I am not going to discuss here plans for mending this neglect, but I can think of three that would work; one of them does work, if not up to the top notch—the public school. In its ultimate development as the neighborhood centre of things,

I would have that the first care of city government, always and everywhere, at whatever expense. An efficient parish districting is another. I think we are coming to that. The last is a rigid annual enrolment—the school census is good, but not good enough—for vaccination purposes, jury duty, for military purposes if you please. I do not mean for conscription, but for the ascertainment of the fighting strength of the State in case of need—for anything that would serve as an excuse. It is the enrolment itself that I think would have a good effect in making the man feel that he is counted on for something; that he belongs as it were, instead of standing idle and watching a procession go by, in which there is no place for him; which is only another way of saying that it is his right to harass it and levy tribute as he can. The enrolment for voting comes too late. By that time he may have joined the looters' army.

So as properly to take my own place in the procession, if not in the army referred to, as I conceived the custom of the country to be, I made it my first business to buy a navy revolver of the largest size, investing in the purchase exactly one-half of my capital. I strapped the weapon on the outside of my coat and strode up Broadway, conscious that I was following the fashion of the country. I knew it upon the authority of a man who had been there before me and had returned, a gold digger in the early days of California; but America was America to us. We knew no distinction of West and East. By rights there ought to have been buffaloes and red Indians charging up and down Broadway. I am

sorry to say that it is easier even to-day to make lots of people over there believe that, than that New York is paved, and lighted with electric lights, and quite as civilized as Copenhagen. They will have it that it is in the wilds. I saw none of the signs of this, but I encountered a friendly policeman, who, sizing me and my pistol up, tapped it gently with his club and advised me to leave it home, or I might get robbed of it. This, at first blush, seemed to confirm my apprehensions; but he was a very nice policeman, and took time to explain, seeing that I was very green. And I took his advice and put the revolver away, secretly relieved to get rid of it. It was quite heavy to carry around.

I had letters to the Danish Consul and to the President of the American Banknote Company, Mr. Goodall. I think perhaps he was not then the president, but became so afterward. Mr. Goodall had once been wrecked on the Danish coast and rescued by the captain of the lifesaving crew, a friend of my family. But they were both in Europe, and in just four days I realized that there was no special public clamor for my services in New York, and decided to go West. A missionary in Castle Garden was getting up a gang of men for the Brady's Bend Iron Works on the Allegheny River, and I went along. We started a full score, with tickets paid, but only two of us reached the Bend. The rest calmly deserted in Pittsburg and went their own way. Now here was an instance of what I have just been saying. Not one of them, probably, would have thought of doing it on the other side. They would have carried out their contract as a matter of course. Here



they broke it as a matter of course, the minute it didn't suit them to go on. Two of them had been on our steamer, and the thought of them makes me laugh even now. One was a Dane who carried an immense knapsack that was filled with sausages, cheese, and grub of all kinds when he came aboard. He never let go of it for a moment on the voyage. In storm and sunshine he was there, shouldering his knapsack. I think he slept with it. When I last saw him hobbling down a side street in Pittsburg, he carried it still, but one end of it hung limp and hungry, and the other was as lean as a bad year. The other voyager was a jovial Swede whose sole baggage consisted of an old musket, a blackthorn stick, and a barometer glass, tied up together. The glass, he explained, was worth keeping; it might some day make an elegant ruler. The fellow was a blacksmith, and I mistrust that he could not write.

Adler and I went on to Brady's Bend. Adler was a big, explosive German who had been a reserve officer, I think, in the Prussian army. Fate had linked us together when on the steamer the meat served in the steerage became so bad as to offend not only our palates, but our sense of smell. We got up a demonstration, marching to see the captain in a body, Adler and I carrying a tray of the objectionable meat between us. As the spokesman, I presented the case briefly and respectfully, and all would have gone well had not the hot blood of Adler risen at the wrong moment, when the captain was cautiously exploring the scent of the rejected food. With a sudden upward jerk he caused that official's nose to disappear momentarily in the dish,

while he exploded in voluble German. The result was an instant rupture of diplomatic relations. Adler was put in the lock-up, but set free again immediately. He spent the rest of the voyage in his bunk shouting dire threats of disaster impending from the "Norddeutsche Consul," once he reached New York. But we were all too glad to get ashore to think of vengeance then.

Adler found work at the blast-furnace, while I was set to building huts for the miners on the east bank of the river where a clearing had been made and called East Brady. On the other side of the Allegheny the furnaces and rolling mills were hidden away in a narrow, winding valley that set back into the forest-clad hills, growing deeper and narrower with every mile. It was to me, who had been used to seeing the sun rise and set over a level plain where the winds of heaven blew as they listed, from the first like a prison. I climbed the hills only to find that there were bigger hills beyond—an endless sea of swelling billows of green without a clearing in it. I spent all Sunday roaming through it, miles and miles, to find an outlook from which I might see the end; but there was none. A horrible fit of homesickness came upon me. The days I managed to get through by working hard and making observations on the American language. In this I had a volunteer assistant in Julia, the pretty, barefooted daughter of a coal-miner, who hung around and took an interest in what was going on. But she disappeared after I had asked her to explain what setting one's cap for any one meant. I was curious because I had heard her mother say to a neighbor that Julia was doing

that to me. But the evenings were very lonesome. The girl in our boarding-house washed dishes always to one tune, "The Letter that Never Came." It was not a cheerful tune and not a cheerful subject, for I had had no news from home since I left. I can hear her yet, shrieking and clattering her dishes, with the frogs yelling accompaniment in the creek that mumbled in the valley. I never could abide American frogs since. There is rest in the ko-ax, ko-ax! of its European brother, but the breathless yi! yi! of our American frogs makes me feel always as if I wanted to die—which I don't.

In making the clearing, I first saw an American wood-cutter swing an axe, and the sight filled me with admiration for the man and the axe both. It was a "double-bitter," and he a typical long-armed and long-limbed backwoodsman. I also had learned to use the axe, but anything like the way he swung it, first over one, then over the other shoulder, making it tell in long, clean cuts at every blow, I had never dreamt of. It was splendid. I wished myself back in Copenhagen just long enough to tell the numskulls there, who were distrustful of American tools, which were just beginning to come into the market, that they didn't know what they were talking about. Of course it was reasonable that the good tools should come from the country where they had good use for them.

There was a settlement of honest Welshmen in the back hills, and the rumor that a Dane had come into the valley reached it in due course. It brought down a company of four sturdy miners,

who trudged five miles over bad land of a Sunday to see what I was like. The Danes who live in Welsh song and story must have been grievous giants, for they were greatly disgusted at sight of me, and spoke their minds about it without reserve, even with some severity, as if I were guilty of some sort of an imposition on the valley.

It could hardly have been this introduction that tempted me to try coal-mining. I have forgotten how it came about—probably through some temporary slackness in the building trade; but I did try, and one day was enough for me. The company mined its own coal. Such as it was, it cropped out of the hills right and left in narrow veins, sometimes too shallow to work, seldom affording more space to the digger than barely enough to permit him to stand upright. You did not go down through a shaft, but straight in through the side of a hill to the bowels of the mountain, following a track on which a little donkey drew the coal to the mouth of the mine and sent it down the incline to run up and down a hill a mile or more by its own gravity before it reached the place of unloading. Through one of these we marched in, Adler and I, one summer morning with new pickaxes on our shoulders and nasty little oil lamps fixed in our hats to light us through the darkness where every second we stumbled over chunks of slate rock, or into pools of water that oozed through from above. An old miner whose way lay past the fork in the tunnel where our lead began showed us how to use our picks and the timbers to brace the slate that roofed over the vein, and left us to ourselves in a chamber

perhaps ten feet wide and the height of a man.

We were to be paid by the ton, I forget how much, but it was very little, and we lost no time getting to work. We had to dig away the coal at the floor with our picks, lying on our knees to do it, and afterward drive wedges under the roof to loosen the mass. It was hard work, and, entirely inexperienced as we were, we made but little headway. As the day wore on, the darkness and silence grew very oppressive, and made us start nervously at the least thing. The sudden arrival of our donkey with its cart gave me a dreadful fright. The friendly beast greeted us with a joyous bray and rubbed its shaggy sides against us in the most companionable way. In the flickering light of my lamp I caught sight of its long ears waving over me—I don't believe I had seen three donkeys before in my life; there were none where I came from—and heard that demoniac shriek, and I verily believe I thought the evil one had come for me in person. I know that I nearly fainted.

That donkey was a discerning animal. I think it knew when it first set eyes on us that we were not going to overwork it; and we didn't. When, toward evening, we quit work, after narrowly escaping being killed by a large stone that fell from the roof in consequence of our neglect to brace it up properly, our united efforts had resulted in barely filling two of the little carts, and we had earned, if I recollect aright, something like sixty cents each. The fall of the roof robbed us of all desire to try mining again. It knocked the lamps from our hats, and, in darkness that could almost be felt, we groped our way back to the light along the

track, getting more badly frightened as we went. The last stretch of way we ran, holding each other's hands as though we were not men and miners, but two frightened children in the dark.

As we emerged from the damp gap in the mountain side, the sunset was upon the hills. Peaceful sounds came up from the valley where the shadows lay deep. Gangs of men were going home from the day's toil to their evening rest. It seemed to me that I had been dead and had come back to life. The world was never so wondrous fair. My companion stood looking out over the landscape with hungry eyes. Neither of us spoke, but when the last gleam had died out in the window of the stone church we went straight to the company's store and gave up our picks. I have never set foot in a coal mine since, and have not the least desire to do so.

I was back in the harness of the carpenter-shop when, in the middle of July, the news struck down in our quiet community like a bombshell that France had declared war on Prussia; also that Denmark was expected to join her forces to those of her old ally and take revenge for the great robbery of 1864. I dropped my tools the moment I heard it, and flew rather than ran to the company's office to demand my time; thence to our boarding-house to pack. Adler reasoned and entreated, called it an insane notion, but, when he saw that nothing would stop me, lent a hand in stuffing my trunk, praying pathetically between pulls that his countrymen would make short work of me, as they certainly would of France. I heeded nothing. All the hot blood

of youth was surging through me. I remembered the defeat, the humiliation of the flag I loved,—aye! and love yet, for there is no flag like the flag of my fathers, save only that of my children and of my manhood,—and I remembered, too, Elizabeth, with a sudden hope. I would be near her then, and I would earn fame and glory. The carpenter would come back with shoulder-straps. Perhaps then, in the castle...I shouldered my trunk and ran for the station. Such tools, clothes, and things as it would not hold I sold for what they would fetch, and boarded the next train for Buffalo, which was as far as my money would take me.

I cannot resist the temptation at this point to carry the story thirty years forward to last winter, in order to point out one of the queer happenings which long ago caused me to be known to my friends as "the man of coincidences." I have long since ceased to consider them as such, though in this one there is no other present significance than that it decided a point which I had been turning over in my own mind, of moment to me and my publisher. I was lecturing in Pittsburg at the time, and ran up to take another look at Brady's Bend. I found the valley deserted and dead. The mills were gone. Disaster had overtaken them in the panic of 1873, and all that remained of the huge plant was a tottering stump of the chimney and clusters of vacant houses dropping to pieces here and there. Young trees grew out of the cold ashes in the blast-furnace. All about was desolation. Strolling down by the river with the editor of the local paper in East Brady, which had grown into a slow little railroad town, my

eye fell upon a wrecked hut in which I recognized the company's office. The shutters were gone, the door hung on one hinge, and the stairs had rotted away, but we climbed in somehow. It was an idle quest, said my companion; all the books and papers had been sold the summer before to a Pittsburg junkman, who came with a cart and pitchforked them into it as so much waste paper. His trail was plain within. The floor was littered with torn maps and newspapers from the second term of President Grant. In a rubbish heap I kicked against something more solid and picked it up. It was the only book left in the place: the "draw-book" for the years 1870-72; and almost the first name I read was my own, as having received, on July 19, 1870, \$10.63 in settlement of my account with the Brady's Bend Company when I started for the war. My companion stared. I wrapped up the book and took it away with me. I considered that I had a moral right to it; but if anybody questions it, it is at his service.

Buffalo was full of Frenchmen, but they did not receive me with a torchlight procession. They even shrugged their shoulders when good old Pater Bretton took up my cause and tried to get me forwarded at least to New York. The one patriot I found to applaud my high resolve was a French pawnbroker, who, with many compliments and shoulder pattings, took my trunk and all its contents, after I had paid my board out of it, in exchange for a ticket to New York. He took my watch, too, but that didn't keep time. I remember seeing my brush go with a grim smile. Having no clothes to brush, I had no need of it any longer.



That pawnbroker was an artist. The year after, when I was in Buffalo again, it occurred to me to go in and see if I could get back any of my belongings. I was just a bit ashamed of myself, and represented that I was a brother of the young hothead who had gone to the war. I thought I discovered a pair of trousers that had been mine hanging up in his store, but the Frenchman was quicker than I. His eyes followed mine, and he took instant umbrage:—

"So your brother vas one shump, vas he?" he yelled. "Your brother vas a long sight better man zan you, mine frient. He go fight for la France. You stay here. Get out!" And he put me out, and saved the day and the trousers.

It was never a good plan for me to lie. It never did work out right, not once. I have found the only safe plan to be to stick to the truth and let the house come down if it must. It will come down anyhow.

I reached New York with just one cent in my pocket, and put up at a boarding-house where the charge was one dollar a day. In this no moral obliquity was involved. I had simply reached the goal for which I had sacrificed all, and felt sure that the French people or the Danish Consul would do the rest quickly. But there was evidently something wrong somewhere. The Danish Consul could only register my demand to be returned to Denmark in the event of war. They have my letter at the office yet, he tells me, and they will call me out with the reserves. The French were fitting out no volunteer army that I could get on the track of,

and nobody was paying the passage of fighting men. The end of it was that, after pawning my revolver and my top-boots, the only valuable possessions I had left, to pay for my lodging, I was thrown on the street, and told to come back when I had more money. That night I wandered about New York with a gripsack that had only a linen duster and a pair of socks in it, turning over in my mind what to do next. Toward midnight I passed a house in Clinton Place that was lighted up festively. Laughter and the hum of many voices came from within. I listened. They spoke French. A society of Frenchmen having their annual dinner, the watchman in the block told me. There at last was my chance. I went up the steps and rang the bell. A flunkey in a dress-suit opened, but when he saw that I was not a guest, but to all appearances a tramp, he tried to put me out. I, on my part, tried to explain. There was an altercation, and two gentlemen of the society appeared. They listened impatiently to what I had to say, then, without a word, thrust me into the street and slammed the door in my face.

It was too much. Inwardly raging, I shook the dust of the city from my feet, and took the most direct route out of it, straight up Third Avenue. I walked till the stars in the east began to pale, and then climbed into a wagon that stood at the curb to sleep. I did not notice that it was a milk-wagon. The sun had not risen yet when the driver came, unceremoniously dragged me out by the feet, and dumped me into the gutter. On I went with my gripsack, straight ahead, until toward noon I reached Fordham College,

famished and footsore. I had eaten nothing since the previous day, and had vainly tried to make a bath in the Bronx River do for breakfast. Not yet could I cheat my stomach that way.

The college gates were open, and I strolled wearily in, without aim or purpose. On a lawn some young men were engaged in athletic exercises, and I stopped to look and admire the beautiful shade-trees and the imposing building. So at least it seems to me at this distance. An old monk in a cowl, whose noble face I sometimes recall in my dreams, came over and asked kindly if I was not hungry. I was in all conscience fearfully hungry, and I said so, though I did not mean to. I had never seen a real live monk before, and my Lutheran training had not exactly inclined me in their favor. I ate of the food set before me, not without qualms of conscience, and with a secret suspicion that I would next be asked to abjure my faith, or at least do homage to the Virgin Mary, which I was firmly resolved not to do. But when, the meal finished, I was sent on my way with enough to do me for supper, without the least allusion having been made to my soul, I felt heartily ashamed of myself. I am just as good a Protestant as I ever was. Among my own I am a kind of heretic even, because I cannot put up with the apostolic succession; but I have no quarrel with the excellent charities of the Roman Church, or with the noble spirit that animates them. I learned that lesson at Fordham thirty years ago.

Up the railroad track I went, and at night hired out to a truck-farmer, with the freedom of his haymow for my sleeping

quarters. But when I had hoed cucumbers three days in a scorching sun, till my back ached as if it were going to break, and the farmer guessed that he would call it square for three shillings, I went farther. A man is not necessarily a philanthropist, it seems, because he tills the soil. I did not hire out again. I did odd jobs to earn my meals, and slept in the fields at night, still turning over in my mind how to get across the sea. An incident of those wanderings comes to mind while I am writing. They were carting in hay, and when night came on, somewhere about Mount Vernon, I gathered an armful of wisps that had fallen from the loads, and made a bed for myself in a wagon-shed by the roadside. In the middle of the night I was awakened by a loud outcry. A fierce light shone in my face. It was the lamp of a carriage that had been driven into the shed. I was lying between the horse's feet unhurt. A gentleman sprang from the carriage, more frightened than I, and bent over me. When he found that I had suffered no injury, he put his hand in his pocket and held out a silver quarter.

"Go," he said, "and drink it up."

"Drink it up yourself!" I shouted angrily. "What do you take me for?"

They were rather high heroics, seeing where I was, but he saw nothing to laugh at. He looked earnestly at me for a moment, then held out his hand and shook mine heartily. "I believe you," he said; "yet you need it, or you would not sleep here. Now will you take it from me?" And I took the money.

The next day it rained, and the next day after that, and I footed it back to the city, still on my vain quest. A quarter is not a great capital to subsist on in New York when one is not a beggar and has no friends. Two days of it drove me out again to find at least the food to keep me alive; but in those two days I met the man who, long years after, was to be my honored chief, Charles A. Dana, the editor of the Sun. There had been an item in the Sun about a volunteer regiment being fitted out for France. I went up to the office, and was admitted to Mr. Dana's presence. I fancy I must have appealed to his sense of the ludicrous, dressed in top-boots and a linen duster much the worse for wear, and demanding to be sent out to fight. He knew nothing about recruiting. Was I French? No, Danish; it had been in his paper about the regiment. He smiled a little at my faith, and said editors sometimes did not know about everything that was in their papers. I turned to go, grievously disappointed, but he called me back.

"Have you," he said, looking searchingly at me, "have you had your breakfast?"

No, God knows that I had not: neither that day nor for many days before. That was one of the things I had at last learned to consider among the superfluities of an effete civilization. I suppose I had no need of telling it to him, for it was plain to read in my face. He put his hand in his pocket and pulled out a dollar.

"There," he said, "go and get your breakfast; and better give up the war."

Give up the war! and for a breakfast. I spurned the dollar hotly.

"I came here to enlist, not to beg money for breakfast," I said, and strode out of the office, my head in the air but my stomach crying out miserably in rebellion against my pride. I revenged myself upon it by leaving my top-boots with the "uncle," who was my only friend and relative here, and filling my stomach upon the proceeds. I had one good dinner anyhow, for when I got through there was only twenty-five cents left of the dollar I borrowed upon my last article of "dress." That I paid for a ticket to Perth Amboy, near which place I found work in Pfeiffer's clay-bank.

Pfeiffer was a German, but his wife was Irish and so were his hands, all except a giant Norwegian and myself. The third day was Sunday, and was devoted to drinking much beer, which Pfeiffer, with an eye to business, furnished on the premises. When they were drunk, the tribe turned upon the Norwegian, and threw him out. It seems that this was a regular weekly occurrence. Me they fired out at the same time, but afterward paid no attention to me. The whole crew of them perched on the Norwegian and belabored him with broomsticks and bale-sticks until they roused the sleeping Berserk in him. As I was coming to his relief, I saw the human heap heave and rock. From under it arose the enraged giant, tossed his tormentors aside as if they were so much chaff, battered down the door of the house in which they took refuge, and threw them all, Mrs. Pfeiffer included, through the window. They were not hurt, and within two hours they were drinking more beer together and swearing at one another endearingly. I concluded that I had

better go on, though Mr. Pfeiffer regretted that he never paid his hands in the middle of the month. It appeared afterward that he objected likewise to paying them at the end of the month, or at the beginning of the next. He owes me two days' wages yet.

# **CHAPTER III**

## **I GO TO WAR AT LAST AND SOW THE SEED OF FUTURE CAMPAIGNS**

At sunset on the second day after my desertion of Pfeiffer I walked across a footbridge into a city with many spires, in one of which a chime of bells rang out a familiar tune. The city was New Brunswick. I turned down a side street where two stone churches stood side by side. A gate in the picket fence had been left open, and I went in looking for a place to sleep. Back in the churchyard I found what I sought in the brownstone slab covering the tomb of, I know now, an old pastor of the Dutch Reformed Church, who died full of wisdom and grace. I am afraid that I was not overburdened with either, or I might have gone to bed with a full stomach too, instead of chewing the last of the windfall apples that had been my diet on my two days' trip; but if he slept as peacefully under the slab as I slept on it, he was doing well. I had for once a dry bed, and brownstone keeps warm long after the sun has set. The night dews and the snakes, and the dogs that kept sniffing and growling half the night in the near distance, had made me tired of sleeping in the fields. The dead were much better company. They minded their own business, and let a fellow



alone.

Before sun-up I was on the tow-path looking for a job. Mules were in demand there, not men. The drift caught me once more, and toward evening cast me up at a country town then called Little Washington, now South River. How I got there I do not now remember. My diary from those days says nothing about it. Years after, I went back over that road and accepted a "lift" from a farmer going my way. We passed through a toll-gate, and I wondered how the keeper came to collect uneven money. We were two men and two horses. When I came back the day after, I found out. So many cents, read the weather-beaten sign that swung from the gate, for team and driver, so many for each additional beast. I had gone through as an additional beast.

A short walk from Little Washington I found work in Peftit's brick-yard at \$22 a month and board. That night, when I turned in after a square meal, in an old wagon I had begged for a bed, I felt like a capitalist. I took to the wagon because one look within the barracks had shown them to be impossible. Whether it was that, or the fact that most of the other hands were Germans, who felt in duty bound to celebrate each victory over the French as it was reported day by day, and so provoked me to wrath—from the first we didn't get on. They made a point whenever they came back from their celebrations in the village, of dragging my wagon, with me fast asleep in it, down into the river, where by and by the tide rose and searched me out. Then I had to swim for it. That was of less account. Our costume was not

elaborate,—a pair of overalls, a woollen shirt, and a straw hat, that was all, and a wetting was rather welcome than otherwise; but they dubbed me Bismarck, and that was not to be borne. My passionate protest only made them laugh the louder. Yet they were not an ill-natured lot, rather the reverse. Saturday afternoon was our wash-day, when we all sported together in peace and harmony in the river. When we came out, we spread our clothes to dry on the roof of the barracks, while we burrowed each in a hill of white sand, and smoked our pipes far into the night, with only our heads and the hand that held the pipe sticking out. That was for protection against mosquitoes. It must have been a sight, one of those Saturday night confabs, but it was solid comfort after the week's work.

Bricks are made literally while the sun shines. The day begins with the first glimmer of light in the east, and is not over till the "pits" are worked out. It was my task to cart clay in the afternoon to fill them up again. It was an idle enough kind of job. All I had to do was to walk alongside my horse, a big white beast with no joints at all except where its legs were hinged to the backbone, back it up to the pit, and dump the load. But, walking so in the autumn sun; I fell a-dreaming. I forgot claybank and pit. I was back in the old town—saw her play among the timber. I met her again on the Long Bridge. I held her hands once more in that last meeting—the while I was mechanically backing my load up to the pit and making ready to dump it. Day-dreams are out of place in a brickyard. I forgot to take out the tail-board. To

my amazement, I beheld the old horse skating around, making frantic efforts to keep its grip on the soil, then slowly rise before my bewildered gaze, clawing feebly at the air as it went up and over, backwards into the pit, load, cart and all.

I wish for my own reputation that I could truly say I wept for the poor beast. I am sure I felt for it, but the reproachful look it gave me as it lay there on its back, its four feet pointing skyward, was too much. I sat upon the edge of the pit and shouted with laughter, feeling thoroughly ashamed of my levity. Mr. Pettit himself checked it, running in with his boys and demanding to know what I was doing. They had seen the accident from the office, and at once set about getting the horse out. That was no easy matter. It was not hurt at all, but it had fallen so as to bend one of the shafts of the truck like a bow. It had to be sawed in two to get the horse out. When that was done, the heavy ash stick, rebounding suddenly, struck one of the boys, who stood by, a blow on the head that laid him out senseless beside the cart.

It was no time for laughter then. We ran for water and restoratives, and brought him to, white and weak. The horse by that time had been lifted to his feet and stood trembling in every limb, ready to drop. It was a sobered driver that climbed out of the pit at the tail end of the procession which bore young Pettit home. I spent a miserable hour hanging around the door of the house waiting for news of him. In the end his father came out to comfort me with the assurance that he would be all right. I was not even discharged, though I was deposed from the wagon to

the command of a truck of which I was myself the horse. I "ran out" brick from the pit after that in the morning.

More than twenty years after, addressing the students of Rutgers College, I told them of my experience in the brick-yard which was so near them. At the end of my address a gentleman came up to me and said, with a twinkle in his eye:

"So that was you, was it? My name is Pettit, and I work the brick-yard now. I helped my father get that horse out of the pit, and I have cause to remember that knock on the head." He made me promise sometime to tell him what happened to me since, and if he will attend now he will have it all.

I had been six weeks in the brick-yard when one day I heard of a company of real volunteers that was ready to sail for France, and forthwith the war fever seized me again. That night I set out for Little Washington, and the next morning's steamer bore me past the brick-yard, where the German hands dropped their barrows and cheered me on with a howl of laughter that was yet not all derision. I had kept my end up with them and they knew it. They had lately let my sleeping-car alone in the old barn. Their shouts rang in my ears, nevertheless, when I reached New York and found that the volunteers were gone, and that I was once more too late. I fell back on the French Consul then, but was treated very cavalierly there. I suppose I became a nuisance, for when I called the twelfth or twentieth time at the office in Bowling Green, he waxed wroth with sudden vehemence and tried to put me out.

Then ensued the only fight of the war in which I was destined to have a part, and that on the wrong side. My gorge rose at these continual insults. I grabbed the French Consul by the nose, and in a moment we were rolling down the oval stairs together, clawing and fighting for all we were worth. I know it was inexcusable, but consider the provocation; after all I had sacrificed to serve his people, to be put out the second time like a beggar and a tramp! I had this one chance of getting even, and that I took it was only human. The racket we made on the stairs roused the whole house. All the clerks ran out and threw themselves upon me. They tore me away from the sacred person of the Consul and thrust me out into the street bleeding and with a swollen eye to rage there, comforted only by the assurance that without a doubt both his were black. I am a little ashamed—not very much—of the fact that it comforts me even now to think of it. He really did me a favor, that Consul; but he was no good. He certainly was not.

It is to be recorded to the credit of my resolution, if not of my common sense, that even after that I made two attempts to get over to France. The one was with the captain of a French man-of-war that lay in the harbor. He would not listen to me at all. The other, and the last, was more successful. I actually got a job as stoker on a French steamer that was to sail for Havre that day in an hour. I ran all the way down to Battery Place, where I had my valise in a boarding-house, and all the way back, arriving at the pier breathless, in time to see my steamer swing out in the stream beyond my reach. It was the last straw. I sat on the stringpiece

and wept with mortification. When I arose and went my way, the war was over, as far as I was concerned. It was that in fact, as it speedily appeared. The country which to-day, after thirty years of trial and bereavement, is still capable of the Dreyfus infamy, was not fit to hold what was its own. I am glad now that I did not go, though I cannot honestly say that I deserve any credit for it.

All my money was gone, and an effort I made to join a railroad gang in the Spuyten Duyvil cut came to nothing. Again I reenforced my credit with my revolver and the everlasting top-boots, but the two or three dollars they brought at the pawnshop were soon gone, and once more I was turned out in the street. It was now late in the fall. The brick-making season was over. The city was full of idle men. My last hope, a promise of employment in a human-hair factory, failed, and, homeless and penniless, I joined the great army of tramps, wandering about the streets in the daytime with the one aim of somehow stilling the hunger that gnawed at my vitals, and fighting at night with vagrant curs or outcasts as miserable as myself for the protection of some sheltering ash-bin or doorway. I was too proud in all my misery to beg. I do not believe I ever did. But I remember well a basement window at the down-town Delmonico's, the silent appearance of my ravenous face at which, at a certain hour in the evening, always evoked a generous supply of meat-bones and rolls from a white-capped cook who spoke French. That was the saving clause. I accepted his rolls as instalments of the debt his country owed me, or ought to owe me, for my unavailing efforts in its

behalf.

It was under such auspices that I made the acquaintance of Mulberry Bend, the Five Points, and the rest of the slum, with which there was in the years to come to be a reckoning. For half a lifetime afterward they were my haunts by day and by night, as a police reporter, and I can fairly lay claim, it seems to me, to a personal knowledge of the evil I attacked. I speak of this because, in a batch of reviews of "A Ten Years' War" [Footnote: Now, "The Battle with the Slum."] which came yesterday from my publishers to me there is one which lays it all to "maudlin sensitiveness" on my part.

"The slum," says this writer, "is not at all so unspeakably vile," and measures for relief based on my arraignment "must be necessarily abortive." Every once in a while I am asked why I became a newspaper man. For one thing, because there were writers of such trash, who, themselves comfortably lodged, have not red blood enough in their veins to feel for those to whom everything is denied, and not sense enough to make out the facts when they see them, or they would not call playgrounds, schoolhouses, and better tenements "abortive measures." Some one had to tell the facts; that is one reason why I became a reporter. And I am going to stay one until the last of that ilk has ceased to discourage men from trying to help their fellows by the shortest cut they can find, whether it fits in a theory or not. I don't care two pins for all the social theories that were ever made unless they help to make better men and women by bettering their lot.

I have had cranks of that order, who rated as sensible beings in the ordinary affairs of life, tell me that I was doing harm rather than good by helping improve the lot of the poor; it delayed the final day of justice we were waiting for. Not I. I don't propose to wait an hour for it, if I can help bring it on; and I know I can.

There! I don't believe I have read fifteen reviews of any of my books. Life is too short; but I am glad I did not miss that one. Those are the fellows for whom Roosevelt is not a good enough reformer; who chill the enthusiasm of mankind with a deadly chill, and miscall it method—science. The science of how not to do a thing—yes! They make me tired.

There was until last winter a doorway in Chatham Square, that of the old Barnum clothing store, which I could never pass without recalling those nights of hopeless misery with the policeman's periodic "Get up there! move on!" reenforced by a prod of his club or the toe of his boot. I slept there, or tried to when crowded out of the tenements in the Bend by their utter nastiness. Cold and wet weather had set in, and a linen duster was all that covered my back. There was a woollen blanket in my trunk which I had from home—the one, my mother had told me, in which I was wrapped when I was born; but the trunk was in the "hotel" as security for money I owed for board, and I asked for it in vain. I was now too shabby to get work, even if there had been any to get. I had letters still to friends of my family in New York who might have helped me, but hunger and want had not conquered my pride. I would come to them, if at all, as their



equal, and, lest I fall into temptation, I destroyed the letters. So, having burned my bridges behind me, I was finally and utterly alone in the city, with the winter approaching and every shivering night in the streets reminding me that a time was rapidly coming when such a life as I led could no longer be endured.

Not in a thousand years would I be likely to forget the night when it came. It had rained all day, a cold October storm, and night found me, with the chill downpour unabated, down by the North River, soaked through and through, with no chance for a supper, forlorn and discouraged. I sat on the bulwark, listening to the falling rain and the swish of the dark tide, and thinking of home. How far it seemed, and how impassable the gulf now between the "castle" with its refined ways, between her in her dainty girlhood and me sitting there, numbed with the cold that was slowly stealing away my senses with my courage. There was warmth and cheer where she was. Here—An overpowering sense of desolation came upon me, I hitched a little nearer the edge. What if—? Would they miss me much or long at home if no word came from me? Perhaps they might never hear. What was the use of keeping it up any longer with, God help us, everything against and nothing to back a lonely lad?

And even then the help came. A wet and shivering body was pressed against mine, and I felt rather than heard a piteous whine in my ear. It was my companion in misery, a little outcast black-and-tan, afflicted with fits, that had shared the shelter of a friendly doorway with me one cold night and had clung to me

ever since with a loyal affection that was the one bright spot in my hard life. As my hand stole mechanically down to caress it, it crept upon my knees and licked my face, as if it meant to tell me that there was one who understood; that I was not alone. And the love of the faithful little beast thawed the icicles in my heart. I picked it up in my arms and fled from the tempter; fled to where there were lights and men moving, if they cared less for me than I for them—anywhere so that I saw and heard the river no more.

In the midnight hour we walked into the Church Street police station and asked for lodging. The rain was still pouring in torrents. The sergeant spied the dog under my tattered coat and gruffly told me to put it out, if I wanted to sleep there. I pleaded for it in vain. There was no choice. To stay in the street was to perish. So I left my dog out on the stoop, where it curled up to wait for me. Poor little friend! It was its last watch. The lodging-room was jammed with a foul and stewing crowd of tramps. A loud-mouthed German was holding forth about the war in Europe, and crowding me on my plank. Cold and hunger had not sufficed to put out the patriotic spark within me. It was promptly fanned into flame, and I told him what I thought of him and his crew. Some Irishmen cheered and fomented trouble, and the doorman came in threatening to lock us all up. I smothered my disgust at the place as well as I could, and slept, wearied nearly to death.

In the middle of the night I awoke with a feeling that something was wrong. Instinctively I felt for the little gold locket

I wore under my shirt, with a part of the precious curl in it that was my last link with home. It was gone. I had felt it there the last thing before I fell asleep. One of the tramp lodgers had cut the string and stolen it. With angry tears I went up and complained to the sergeant that I had been robbed. He scowled at me over the blotter, called me a thief, and said that he had a good mind to lock me up. How should I, a tramp boy, have come by a gold locket? He had heard, he added, that I had said in the lodging-room that I wished the French would win, and he would only be giving me what I deserved if he sent me to the Island. I heard and understood. He was himself a German. All my sufferings rose up before me, all the bitterness of my soul poured itself out upon him. I do not know what I said. I remember that he told the doorman to put me out. And he seized me and threw me out of the door, coming after to kick me down the stoop.

My dog had been waiting, never taking its eyes off the door, until I should come out. When it saw me in the grasp of the doorman, it fell upon him at once, fastening its teeth in his leg. He let go of me with a yell of pain, seized the poor little beast by the legs, and beat its brains out against the stone steps.

At the sight a blind rage seized me. Raving like a madman, I stormed the police station with paving-stones from the gutter. The fury of my onset frightened even the sergeant, who saw, perhaps, that he had gone too far, and he called two policemen to disarm and conduct me out of the precinct anywhere so that he got rid of me. They marched me to the nearest ferry and turned

me loose. The ferry-master halted me. I had no money, but I gave him a silk handkerchief, the last thing about me that had any value, and for that he let me cross to Jersey City. I shook the dust of New York from my feet, vowing that I would never return, and, setting my face toward the west, marched straight out the first railroad track I came to.

And now, right here, begins the part of my story that is my only excuse for writing down these facts, though it will not appear for a while yet. The outrage of that night became, in the providence of God, the means of putting an end to one of the foulest abuses that ever disgraced a Christian city, and a mainspring in the battle with the slum as far as my share in it is concerned. My dog did not die unavenged.

I walked all day, following the track, and in the afternoon crossed the long trestlework of the Jersey Central Railroad over Newark Bay, with my face set toward Philadelphia. I had friends there, distant relatives, and had at last made up my mind to go to them and ask them to start me afresh. On the road which I had chosen for myself I had come to the jumping-off place. Before night I found company in other tramps who had been over the road before and knew just what towns to go around and which to walk through boldly. Rahway, if I remember rightly, was one of those to be severely shunned. I discovered presently that I was on the great tramps' highway, with the column moving south on its autumn hegira to warmer climes. I cannot say I fancied the company. Tramps never had any attraction for me,

as a sociological problem or otherwise. I was compelled, more than once, to be of and with them, but I shook their company as quickly as I could. As for the "problem" they are supposed to represent, I think the workhouse and the police are quite competent to deal with that, provided it is not a Tammany police. It does not differ appreciably from the problem of human laziness in any other shape or age. We got some light on that, which ought to convince anybody, when under Mayor Strong's administration we tried to deal intelligently with vagrancy. One-half of the homeless applicants for night shelter were fat, well-nourished young loafers who wouldn't work. That is not my statement, but the report of the doctor who saw them stripped, taking their bath. The bath and the investigation presently decreased their numbers, until in a week scarcely anything was left of the "problem" that had bothered us so.

Four days I was on the way to Philadelphia, living on apples and an occasional meal earned by doing odd jobs. At night I slept in lonely barns that nearly always had a board ripped out—the tramps' door. I tried to avoid the gang, but I was not always successful. I remember still with a shudder an instance of that kind. I was burrowing in a haymow, thinking myself alone. In the night a big storm came up. The thunder shook the old barn, and I sat up wondering if it would be blown away. A fierce lightning-flash filled it with a ghostly light, and showed me within arm's length a white and scared face with eyes starting from their sockets at the sight of me. The next moment all was

black darkness again. My heart stood still for what seemed the longest moment of my life. Then there came out of the darkness a quaking voice asking, "Is anybody there?" For once I was glad to have a live tramp about. I really thought it was a ghost.

The last few miles to Camden I rode in a cattle-car, arriving there at night, much the worse for the wear of it on my linen duster. In the freight-yard I was picked up by a good-hearted police captain who took me to his station, made me tell him my story, and gave me a bed in an unused cell, the door of which he took the precaution to lock on the outside. But I did not mind. Rather that a hundred times than the pig-sty in the New York station-house. In the morning he gave me breakfast and money to get my boots blacked and to pay my fare across the Delaware. And so my homeless wanderings came, for the time being, to an end. For in Philadelphia I found in the Danish Consul, Ferdinand Myhlertz, and his dear wife, friends indeed as in need. The City of Brotherly Love found heart and time to welcome the wanderer, though at the time it was torn up by the hottest kind of fight over the question whether or not to disfigure the beautiful square at Broad and Market streets by putting the new municipal building there.

When, after two weeks' rest with my friends, they sent me on my way to an old schoolmate in Jamestown, N.Y., clothed and in my right mind, I was none the worse for my first lesson in swimming against the current, and quite sure that next time I should be able to breast it. Hope springs eternal at twenty-one. I

had many a weary stretch ahead before I was to make port. But with youth and courage as the equipment, one should win almost any fight.

## CHAPTER IV

# WORKING AND WANDERING

Winter came quickly up by the northern lakes, but it had no terror for me. For once I had shelter and enough to eat. It found me felling trees on Swede Hill, where a considerable settlement of Scandinavians was growing up. I had tried my hand at making cradles in a furniture-shop, but at two dollars and forty cents per dozen there was not much profit in it. So I took to the woods and learned to swing an axe in the American fashion that had charmed me so at Brady's Bend. I liked it much better, anyway, than being in the house winter and summer. It is well that we are fashioned that way, some for indoors and some for outdoors, for so the work of the world is all done; but it has always seemed to me that the indoor folk take too big a share of credit to themselves, as though there were special virtue in that, though I think that the reverse is the case. At least it seems more natural to want to be out in the open where the sun shines and the winds blow. When I was not chopping wood I was helping with the ice harvest on the lake or repairing the steamer that ran in summer between Jamestown and Mayville. My home was in Dexterville, a mile or so out of town, where there lived a Danish family, the Romers, at whose home I was made welcome. The friendship which grew up between us has endured through life and been to



me a treasure. Gentler and truer hearts than those of Nicholas and John Romer there are not many.

I shared my room with another countryman, Anthony Ronne, a young axe-maker, who, like myself, was in hard luck. The axe-factory had burned down, and, with no work in sight, the outlook for him was not exactly bright. He had not my way of laughing it off, but was rather disposed to see the serious side of it. Probably that was the reason we took to each other; the balance was restored so. Maybe he sobered me down somewhat. If any one assumes that in my role of unhappy lover I went about glooming and glowering on mankind, he makes a big mistake. Besides, I had not the least notion of accepting that role as permanent. I was out to twist the wheel of fortune my way when I could get my hands upon it. I never doubted that I should do that sooner or later, if only I kept doing things. That Elizabeth should ever marry anybody but me was preposterously impossible, no matter what she or anybody said.

Was this madness? They half thought so at home when they caught a glimpse of it in my letters. Not at all. It was conviction—the conviction that shapes events and the world to its ends. I know what I am talking about. If any one doubts it, and thinks his a worse case than mine, let him try my plan. If he cannot muster up courage to do it, it is the best proof in the world that she was right in refusing him.

To return to my chum; he, on his part, rose to the height even of "going out," but not with me. There was a physical obstacle

to that. We had but one coat between us, a turned black kersey, worn very smooth and shiny also on the wrong side, which I had bought of a second-hand dealer in Philadelphia for a dollar. It was our full-dress, and we took turns arraying ourselves in it for the Dexterville weekly parties. These gatherings interested me chiefly as outbreaks of the peculiar American humor that was very taking to me, in and out of the newspapers. Dancing being tabooed as immoral and contaminating, the young people had recourse to particularly energetic kissing games, which more than made up for their deprivation on the other score. It was all very harmless and very funny, and the winter wore away pleasantly enough in spite of hard luck and hard work when there was any.

With the early thaw came change. My friends moved away to Buffalo, and I was left for two months the sole occupant of the Romer homestead. My last job gave out about that time, and a wheelbarrow express which I established between Dexter-ville and the steamboat landing on the lake refused to prosper. The idea was good enough, but I was ahead of my time: travel on the lake had not yet begun. With my field thus narrowed down, I fell back on my gun and some old rat-traps I found in the woodshed. I became a hunter and trapper. Right below me was the glen through which the creek ran on its way to the sawmills and furniture-shops of Jamestown. It was full of musk-rats that burrowed in its banks between the roots of dead hemlocks and pines. There I set my traps and baited them with carrots and

turnips. The manner of it was simple enough. I set the trap on the bottom of the creek and hung the bait on a stick projecting from the bank over it, so that to get at it the rat had to step on the trap. I caught lots of them. Their skins brought twenty cents apiece in the town, so that I was really quite independent. I made often as much as a dollar overnight with my traps, and then had the whole day to myself in the hills, where I waylaid many a fat rabbit or squirrel and an occasional bird.

The one thing that marred my enjoyment of this life of freedom was my vain struggle to master the art of cookery in its elements. To properly get the hang of that, and of housekeeping in general, two heads are needed, as I have found out since—one of them with curls and long eyelashes. Then it is fine fun; but it is not good for man to tackle that job alone. Goodness knows I tried hard enough. I remember the first omelet I made. I was bound to get it good. So I made a muster-roll of all the good things Mrs. Romer had left in the house, and put them all in. Eggs and strawberry jam and raisins and apple-sauce, and some sliced bacon—the way I had seen mother do with "egg pancakes." But though I seasoned it liberally with baking-powder to make it rise, it did not rise. It was dreadfully heavy and discouraging, and not even the strawberry jam had power to redeem it. To tell the truth, it was not a good omelet. It was hardly fit to eat. The jam came out to better advantage in the sago I boiled, but there was too much of it. It was only a fruit-jar full, but I never saw anything swell so. It boiled out of the pot and into another and another,

while I kept pouring on water until nearly every jar in the house was full of sago that stood around until moss grew on it with age. There is much contrariness in cooking. When I tapped my maples with the rest—there were two big trees in front of the house—and tried to make sugar, I was prepared to see the sap boil away; but when I had labored a whole day and burned half a cord of wood, and had for my trouble half a tea-cupful of sugar, which made me sick into the bargain, I concluded that that game was not worth the candle, and gave up my plans of becoming a sugar-planter on a larger scale.

It was at this time that I made my first appearance on the lecture platform. There was a Scandinavian society in Jamestown, composed chiefly of workingmen whose fight with life had left them little enough time for schooling. They were anxious to learn, however, and as I was set on teaching where I saw the chance, the thing came of itself. I had been mightily interested in the Frenchman Figuier's account of the formation and development of the earth, and took that for my topic. Twice a week, when I had set my traps in the glen, I went to town and talked astronomy and geology to interested audiences that gazed terror stricken at the loathsome saurians and the damnable pterodactyl which I sketched on the blackboard. Well they might. I spared them no gruesome detail, and I never could draw, anyhow. However, I rescued them from those beasts in season, and together we hauled the earth through age-long showers of molten metal into the sunlight of our day. I sometimes carried

home as much as two or three dollars, after paying for gas and hall, with the tickets ten cents apiece, and I saw wealth and fame ahead of me, when sudden wreck came to my hopes and my career as a lecturer.

It was all because, having got the earth properly constructed and set up, as it were, I undertook to explain about latitude and longitude. Figures came in there, and I was never strong at mathematics. My education in that branch had run into a snag about the middle of the little multiplication table. A boy from the "plebs" school challenged me to fight, as I was making my way to recitation, trying to learn the table by heart. I broke off in the middle of the sixes to wallop him, and never got any farther. The class went on that day without me, and I never overtook it. I made but little effort. In the Latin School, which rather prided itself upon being free from the commercial taint, mathematics was held to be in the nature of an intrusion, and it was a sort of good mark for a boy that he did not take to it, if at the same time he showed aptitude for language. So I was left to deplore with Marjorie Fleming to the end of my days the inherent viciousness of sevens and eights, as "more than human nature can endure." It is one of the ironies of life that I should have had to take up work into which the study of statistics enters largely. But the powers that set me the task provided a fitter back than mine for that burden. As I explained years ago in the preface to "How the Other Half Lives," the patient friendship of Dr. Roger S. Tracy, the learned statistician of the Health Department, has smoothed

the rebellious kinks out of death-rates and population statistics, as of so many other knotty problems which we have worked out together.

But I am getting out of my longitude, as I did then. When I had groped about long enough trying to make my audience understand what I only half understood myself, an old sea-captain arose in his place and said that any man who would make a mess of so simple a thing as latitude and longitude evidently knew nothing at all. It happened to be the one thing he knew about. Popular favor is a fickle thing. The audience that had but now been applauding my efforts to organize the earth took his word for it without waiting for an explanation and went out in a body, scouting even the ichthyosaurus as a prehistoric fake.

I made a valiant effort to stem the tide, but came to worse grief than before. My only listener was a Swedish blacksmith who had attended the creation and development of the earth from the beginning with unshaken faith, though he was a member of the Lutheran church, with the pastor and deacons of which I had waged a bitter newspaper war over the "sin" of dancing. But when I said, on the authority of Figuier, that an English man-of-war had once during an earthquake been thrown into the city of Callao and through the roof of a church, between the walls of which it remained standing upright on its keel, he got up and went too. He circulated the story in town with various embellishments. The deacons aforesaid seized upon it as welcome ammunition, construing it into an insult to the church, and there was an end

to my lecturing.

The warm spring weather, together with these disappointments, bred in me the desire to roam. I packed away my traps and started for Buffalo with my grip, walking along the lake. It set in with a drizzling rain, and I was soon wet to the skin. Where the Chautauqua summer school grounds are now I surprised a flock of wild ducks near the shore, and was lucky enough to wound one with my revolver. But the wind carried it out of my reach, and I trudged on supperless, through Mayville, where the lights were beginning to shine in the windows. Not one of them was for me. All my money had gone to pay back debts to my Dexterville landlady. The Danes had a good name in Jamestown, and we were all very jealous of it. We would have starved, every one of us, rather than leave unpaid debts behind. As Mrs. Ben Wah many years after put it to me, "it is no disgrace to be poor, but it is sometimes very inconvenient." I found it so when, worn out with walking, I crawled into an abandoned barn halfway to Westfield and dug down in the hay, wet through and hungry as a bear. It stormed and rained all night, and a rat or a squirrel fell from the roof on my face. It felt like a big sprawling hand, and woke me up in a great fright.

The sun was shining upon a peaceful Sabbath when I crawled out of my hole and saw to my dismay that I had been sleeping in a pile of old hay seed that had worked through and through my wet clothes until I was a sight. An hour's patient plucking and a bath in a near-by pond restored me to something like human

shape, and I held my entry into Westfield. The people were going to church in their holiday clothes, and eyed the uncouth stranger askance. I travelled the whole length of the town thinking what to do next. My stomach decided for me. There was a house standing in a pretty garden with two little cast-iron negro boys for hitching-posts at the steps. I rang the bell, and to an old lady who opened the door I offered to chop wood, fetch water, or do anything there was to do in exchange for breakfast. She went in and brought out her husband, who looked me over and said that if I was willing to do his chores I need go no farther. I was tired and famished, and the place was so restful that I said yes at once. In ten minutes I was eating my breakfast in the kitchen, duly installed as Dr. Spencer's hired man.

I think of the month I spent in the doctor's house with mingled feelings of exasperation and amusement. If I had not learned to milk a cow there, probably Octavia Ely would never have come into my life, horrid nightmare that she was. Octavia Ely was a Jersey cow with a brass tag in her ear, whose attacks upon the domestic peace of my house in after years even now fill me with rage. In the twelve months of her sojourn with us she had fifteen different kinds of disease, every one of which advertised itself by the stopping of her milk. When she had none, she never once gave down the milk without grudging it. With three of us to hold her legs and tail lest she step in the pail or switch our ears, she would reach back and eat the vest off my back where I sat milking her. But she does not belong in this story, thank goodness! If she



had never belonged to me or mine, I should be a better man to-day; she provoked me so. However, I cannot reasonably lay the blame for her on the doctor. His cow was friendly enough. It was Sport, the old dog, that made the heaviest and at the same time a most ludicrous item in my duties as hired man. Long past the age of sport of any kind, he spent his decadent years in a state of abject fear of thunder and lightning. If only a cloud darkened the sun, Sport kept up a ceaseless pilgrimage between his corner and the kitchen door to observe the sky, sighing most grievously at the outlook. At the first distant rumble—this was in the month of May, when it thundered almost every day—he became perfectly rigid with terror. It was my duty then to carry him down into the cellar and shut him in the wood-box, where he was out of the way of it all. Poor Sport laid his head against my shoulder and wept great tears that wrung peals of laughter from me and from the boys who always hung around to see the show.

One of these was just beginning the struggle with his Homer, which I knew by heart almost, and it may have been the discovery that I was able to steer him through it between chores, as well as to teach him some tricks of fencing, that helped make the doctor anxious that I should promise to stay with him always. He would make me rich, he said. But other ambitions than to milk cows and plant garden truck were stirring in me. To be rich was never among them. I had begun to write essays for the magazines, choosing for my topic, for want of any other, the maltreatment of Denmark by Prussia, which rankled fresh in my

memory, and the duty of all Scandinavians to rise up and avenge it. The Scandinavians would not listen when I wrote in Danish, and my English outpourings never reached the publishers. I discovered that I lacked words—they didn't pour; at which, in general discontentment with myself and all things, I pulled up stakes and went to Buffalo. Only, this time I rode in a railway train, with money in my pocket.

For all that, Buffalo received me with no more circumstance than it had done when I came there penniless, on the way to the war, the year before. I piled boards in a lumber-yard until I picked a quarrel with a tyrant foreman on behalf of a lot of green Germans whom he maltreated most shamefully. Then I was put out. A cabinet-maker in the "Beehive," a factory building out in Niagara Street, hired me next to make bedsteads, and took me to board with him. In the top story of the factory we fitted up a bedroom that was just large enough for one sitting and two standing, so long as the door was not opened; then one of the two had to get out. It mattered little, for the only visitor I had was a half-elderly countryman of mine whom they had worked so hard in his childhood that he had never had a chance to go to school. We two labored together by my little lamp, and it was great fun to see him who had never known how to read and write his own Danish make long strides in the strange tongue he spoke so singularly well. When we were both tired out, we would climb up on the roof and lie there and look out over the lake and the city where the myriad lights were shining, and talk of the old

home and old times.

Sometimes the new would crowd them out in spite of all. I remember that Fourth of July when the salute from Fort Porter woke me up at sunrise and fired me with sudden patriotic ardor. I jumped out of bed and grabbed my revolver. There was a pile of packing-boxes in the yard below, and, knowing that there was no one around whom I could hurt, I made it my target and fired away all my ammunition at it. It made a fine racket, and I was happy. A couple of days later, when I was down in the yard, it occurred to me to look at the boxes to ascertain what kind of a score I had made. A very good one. All the bullets had hit. The boxes looked like so many sieves. Incidentally I found out that they were not empty, as I had supposed, but filled with glass fruit-jars.

I had eventually to give that job up also, because my boss was "bad pay." He was pretty much all bad, I guess. I do think his house was the most disorderly one I have ever come across. Seven ill-favored children clamored about the table, fighting with their even more ill-favored mother. She used to single out the one she wished to address by slamming a handful of string-beans, or whatever greens might be at hand, across the table at him. The youngster would fire it back, and so they were *en rapport* with each other. The father was seldom sober at meals. When he "felt funny," he would stealthily pour a glass of water down the nearest child's back and then sit and chuckle over the havoc he had wrought. There followed a long and woful wail and an instant explosion from the mother in this wise. I can hear her now. It

was always the same:—

"Gott-himmel-donnerwetter-noch-omal-ich-will-de-mal-hole-du-spitzbub-eselskerl-wart'-nur-ich-schlag-de-noch-todt-potz-sacrement!"

Whereupon, from sheer exhaustion all round, there was peace for at least five minutes.

Which reminds me of meeting Adler, my chum from Brady's Bend, in Buffalo. He had come up to get a \$1500 place, as he informed me. That would about satisfy him. That such jobs were waiting by the score for an educated German in this barbarous land he never doubted for a moment. In the end he went to work in a rolling-mill at a dollar a day. Adler was ever a stickler for etiquette. In Brady's Bend we had very little of it. At mealtimes a flock of chickens used to come into the summer kitchen where we ate, and forage around, to Adler's great disgust. One day they deliberately flew up on the table, and fell to fighting with the boarders for the food. A big Shanghai rooster trod in the butter and tracked it over the table. At the sight Adler's rage knew no bounds. Seizing a half-loaf of bread, he aimed it at the rooster and felled him in his tracks. The flock of fowl flew squawking out of the door. The women screamed, and the men howled with laughter. Adler flourished another loaf and vowed vengeance upon bird or beast that did not let the butter alone.

I have been often enough out of patience with the ways of the labor men which seem to me to be the greatest hindrance to the success of their cause; but I am not in danger of forgetting

the other side which makes that cause—if for no other reason, because of an experience I had in Buffalo that year. In a planing-mill in which I had found employment I contracted with the boss to plane doors, sandpaper them, and plug knot-holes at fifteen cents a door. It was his own offer, and I did the work well, better than it had been done before, so he said himself. But when he found at the end of the week that I had made \$15 where my slow-coach predecessor had made only ten, he cut the price down to twelve cents. I objected, but in the end swallowed my anger and, by putting on extra steam and working overtime, made \$16 the next week. The boss examined the work very carefully, said it was good, paid my wages, and cut down the price to ten cents. He did not want his men to make over \$10 a week, he said; it was not good for them. I quit then, after giving him my opinion of him and of the chances of his shop. I do not know where he may be now, but wherever he is, I will warrant that my prediction came true. There is in Danish an old proverb, "Falsk slaar sin egen Herre paa Hals," which is to say that chickens come home to roost, and that right in the end does prevail over might. The Lord Chief Justice over all is not to be tricked. If the labor men will only remember that, and devote, let us say, as much time to their duties as to fighting for their rights, they will get them sooner. Which is not saying that there is not a time to strike. Witness my experience with the planing-mill man.

I struck not only against him, but against the whole city of Buffalo. I shook the dust of it from my feet and went out to

work with a gang on a new railroad then being built through Cattaraugus County—the Buffalo and Washington, I think. Near a village called Coonville our job was cut out for us. We were twenty in the gang, and we were to build the line across an old dry river-bed at that point. In the middle of the river there had once been a forest-clad island. This we attacked with pickaxe and spade and carried it away piecemeal in our wheelbarrows. It fell in with the hottest weather of the year. Down in the hollow where no wind blew it was utterly unbearable. I had never done such work before, and was not built for it. I did my best to keep up with the gang, but my chest heaved and my heart beat as though it would burst. There were nineteen Irishmen in the gang—big, rough fellows who had picked me out, as the only "Dutchman," as the butt for their coarse jokes; but when they saw that the work was plainly too much for me, the other side of this curiously contradictory, mischief-loving, and big-hearted people came out. They invented a thousand excuses to get me out of the line. Water was certainly not their daily diet, but they fell victims, one and all, to the most ravening thirst, which required the despatching of me every hour to the spring a quarter of a mile away to fill the pail. If they could not empty it quickly enough, they managed to upset it, and, to cover up the fraud, cursed each other roundly for their clumsiness. Between whiles they worried me as ever with their horseplay; but I had seen the real man behind it, and they might have called me Bismarck, had they chosen, without offence.

The heat, the work, and the slave-driver of a foreman were

too much for them even, and before the end of a week the gang was broken and scattered wide. I was on the road again looking for work on a farm. It was not to be had. Perhaps I did not try very hard. Sunday morning found me spending my last quarter for breakfast in an inn at Lime Lake. When I had eaten, I went out in the fields and sat with my back against a tree, and listened to the church-bells that were ringing also, I knew, in my home four thousand miles away. I saw the venerable Domkirke, my father's gray head in his pew, and Her, young and innocent, in the women's seats across the aisle. I heard the old pastor's voice in the solemn calm, and my tears fell upon her picture that had called up the vision. It was as if a voice spoke to me and said to get up and be a man; that if I wanted to win Elizabeth, to work for her was the way, and not idling my days away on the road. And I got right up, and, setting my face toward Buffalo, went by the shortest cut back to my work.

I walked day and night, pursued in the dark by a hundred skulking curs that lurked behind trees until I came abreast of them and then sallied out to challenge my progress. I stoned them and went on. Monday's setting sun saw me outside Buffalo, tired, but with a new purpose. I had walked fifty miles without stopping or eating. I slept under a shed that night, and the very next day found work at good wages on some steamers the Erie Railroad was then building for the Lake Superior trade. With intervals of other employment when for any reason work in the ship-yard was slack, I kept that up all winter, and became quite opulent, even

to the extent of buying a new suit of clothes, the first I had had since I landed. I paid off all my debts, and quarrelled with all my friends about religion. I never had any patience with a person who says "there is no God." The man is a fool, and therefore cannot be reasoned with. But in those days I was set on converting him, as my viking forefathers did when from heathen they became Christians—by fire and sword if need be. I smote the infidels about me hip and thigh, but there were a good many of them, and they kept springing up, to my great amazement. Probably the constant warfare imparted a tinge of fierceness to that whole period of my life, for I remember that one of my employers, a Roman Catholic builder, discharged me for disagreeing with him about the saints, telling me that I was "too blamed independent, anyhow." I suspect I must have been a rather unlovely customer, take it all together. Still, every once in a while it boils up in me yet against the discretion that has come with the years, and I want to slam in after the old fashion. Seems to me we are in danger of growing stale with all our soft speeches nowadays.

Things enough happened to take down my self-esteem a good many pegs. It was about this time I made up my mind to go into the newspaper business. It seemed to me that a reporter's was the highest and noblest of all callings; no one could sift wrong from right as he, and punish the wrong. In that I was right. I have not changed my opinion on that point one whit, and I am sure I never shall. The power of fact is the mightiest lever of this or of any day. The reporter has his hand upon it, and it is his grievous fault



if he does not use it well. I thought I would make a good reporter. My father had edited our local newspaper, and such little help as I had been of to him had given me a taste for the business. Being of that mind, I went to the *Courier* office one morning and asked for the editor. He was not in. Apparently nobody was. I wandered through room after room, all empty, till at last I came to one in which sat a man with a paste-pot and a pair of long shears. This must be the editor; he had the implements of his trade. I told him my errand while he clipped away.

"What is it you want?" he asked, when I had ceased speaking and waited for an answer.

"Work," I said.

"Work!" said he, waving me haughtily away with the shears; "we don't work here. This is a newspaper office."

I went, abashed. I tried the Express next. This time I had the editor pointed out to me. He was just coming through the business office. At the door I stopped him and preferred my request. He looked me over, a lad fresh from the shipyard, with horny hands and a rough coat, and asked:—

"What are you?"

"A carpenter," I said.

The man turned upon his heel with a loud, rasping laugh and shut the door in my face. For a moment I stood there stunned. His ascending steps on the stairs brought back my senses. I ran to the door, and flung it open. "You laugh!" I shouted, shaking my fist at him, standing halfway up the stairs, "you laugh now,

but wait—" And then I got the grip of my temper and slammed the door in my turn. All the same, in that hour it was settled that I was to be a reporter. I knew it as I went out into the street.

# CHAPTER V

## I GO INTO BUSINESS, HEADLONG

Somewhat suddenly and quite unexpectedly, a business career opened for me that winter. Once I had tried to crowd into it uninvited, but the result was not good. It was when I had observed that, for the want of the window reflectors which were much in use in the old country, American ladies were at a disadvantage in their homes in not being able to make out undesirable company at a distance, themselves unseen, and conveniently forgetting that they were "in." This civilizing agency I set about supplying forthwith. I made a model and took it to a Yankee business man, to whom I explained its use. He listened attentively, took the model, and said he had a good mind to have me locked up for infringing the patent laws of other lands; but because I had sinned from ignorance he would refrain. His manner was so impressive that he really made me uneasy lest I had broken some kind of a law I knew not of. From the fact that not long after window reflectors began to make their appearance in Buffalo, I infer that, whatever the enactment, it did not apply to natives, or else that he was a very fearless man, willing to take the risk from which he would save me—a sort of commercial philanthropist. However, by that time I had other things to think of, being a drummer and a very energetic one.

It came about in this way: some countrymen of mine had started a cooperative furniture-factory in Jamestown, where there were water-power and cheap lumber. They had no capital, but just below was the oil country, where everybody had money, slathers of it. New wells gushed every day, and boom towns were springing up all along the Allegheny valley. Men were streaming into it from everywhere, and needed furniture. If once they got the grip on that country, reasoned the furniture-makers, they would get rich quickly with the rest. The thing was to get it. To do that they needed a man who could talk. Perhaps they remembered the creation of the world the year before. At all events, they sent up to Buffalo and asked me if I would try.

I slammed my tool-box shut and started for Jamestown on the next train. Twenty-four hours later saw me headed for the oil country, equipped with a mighty album and a price-list. The album contained pictures of the furniture I had for sale. All the way down I studied the price-list, and when I reached Titusville I knew to a cent what it cost my employers per foot to make ash extension tables. I only wish they had known half as well.

My first customer was a grumpy old shopkeeper who needed neither tables nor bedsteads, so he said. But I had thought it all over and made up my mind that the first blow was half the battle. Therefore I knew better. I pushed my album under his nose, and it fell open at the extension tables. Cheap, I said, and rattled off the price. I saw him prick up his ears, but he only growled that probably they were no good.

What! my extension tables no good? I dared him to try them, and he gave me an order for a dozen, but made me sign an agreement that they were to be every way as represented. I would have backed my tables with an order for the whole shop, so sure was I that they could not be beaten. The idea! With the fit of righteous indignation upon me, I went out and sold every other furniture-dealer in Titusville a bill of tables; not one of them escaped. At night, when I had sent the order home, I set out for Oil City, so as to lose no valuable time.

It was just the same there. For some reason they were suspicious of the extension tables, yet they wanted nothing else. I had to give ironclad guarantees that they were as represented, which I did impatiently enough. There was a thunder storm raging at the time. The lightning had struck a tank, and the burning oil ran down a hill and set the town on fire. One end of it was burning while I was canvassing the other, mentally calculating how many extension tables would be needed to replace those that were lost. People did not seem to have heard of any other kind of furniture in that country. Walnut bed-steads, marble-top bureaus, turned washstands—they passed them all by to fall upon the tables with shrill demand. I made out their case to suit the facts, as I swept down through that region, scattering extension tables right and left. It was the excitement, I reasoned, the inrush of population from everywhere; probably everybody kept boarders, more every day; had to extend their tables to seat them. I saw a great opportunity and resolutely grasped it. If it

was tables they wanted, tables it should be. I let all the rest of the stock go and threw myself on the tables exclusively. Town after town I filled with them. Night after night the mails groaned under the heavy orders for extension tables I sent north. From Allegheny City alone an order of a thousand dollars' worth from a single reputable dealer went home, and I figured in my notebook that night a commission of \$50 for myself plus my salary.

I could know nothing of the despatches that were hot on my trail ever since my first order came from Titusville, telling me to stop, let up on the tables, come home, anything; there was a mistake in the price. They never overtook me. My pace was too hot for that. Anyhow, I doubt if I would have paid any attention to them. I had my instructions and was selling according to orders. Business was good, getting better every day. The firm wrote to my customers, but they merely sent back copies of the iron-clad contract. They had seen my instructions, and they knew it was all right. It was not until I brought up, my last penny gone, in Rochester, near the Ohio line, that the firm established communication with me at last. Their instructions were brief: to come home and sell no more tables. They sent \$10, but gave me no clue to their curious decision, with things booming as they were.

Being in the field I considered that, whatever was up, I had a better command of the situation. I decided that I would not go home,—at least not until I had sold a few more extension tables while they were in such demand. I made that \$10 go farther

than \$10 ever went before. It took me a little way into Ohio, to Youngstown, and then back to Pennsylvania, to Warren and Meadville and Corry. My previous training in going hungry for days came in handy at last. In the interests of commerce, I let my dinners go. So I was enabled to make a final dash to Erie, where I planted my last batch of tables before I went home, happy.

I got home in time to assist in the winding up of the concern. The iron-clad contracts had done the business. My customers would not listen to explanations. When told that the price of those tables was lower than the cost of working up the wood, they replied that it was none of their business. They had their contracts. The Allegheny man threatened suit, if I remember rightly, and the firm gave up. Nobody blamed me, for I had sold according to orders; but instead of \$450 which I had figured out as my commission, I got seventy-five cents. It was half of what my employer had. He divided squarely, and I could not in reason complain.

I sat in the restaurant where he had explained the situation to me, and tried to telescope my ambitions down to the seventy-five-cent standard, when my eyes fell upon a copy of *Harper's Weekly* that lay on the table. Absent-mindedly I read an advertisement in small type, spelling it over idly while I was trying to think what to do next.

"Wanted," it read, "by the Myers Manufacturing Company, agents to sell a patent flat and fluting iron. Samples 75 cents."

The address was somewhere in John Street, New York.

Samples seventy-five cents! I repeated it mechanically. Why, that was just the size of my pile. And right in my line of canvassing, too! In ten minutes it was on the way to New York and I had secured a provisional customer in the cook at the restaurant for an iron that would perform what this one promised, iron the skirt and flute the flounce too. In three days the iron came and proved good. I started in canvassing Jamestown with it, and in a week had secured orders for one hundred and twenty, upon which my profit would be over \$80. Something of business ways must have stuck to me, after all, from my one excursion into the realm of trade; for when it came to delivering the goods and I had no money, I went boldly to a business man whose wife was on my books, and offered, if he would send for the irons, to pay for them as I took them out of the store. He made no bones about it, but sent for the irons and handed them over to me to pay for when I could. So men are made. Commercial character, as it is rated on 'change, I had none before that; but I had after. How could I disappoint a man like that?

The confidence of the community I had not lost through my too successful trip as a drummer, at all events. Propositions came speedily to me to "travel in" pianos and pumps for local concerns. It never rains but it pours. An old schoolmate who had been ordained a clergyman wrote to me from Denmark to find him a charge among the Danish settlements out West. But neither pumps, pianos, nor parsons had power to swerve me from my chosen course. With them went bosses and orders; with the flat-



iron cherished independence. When I had sold out Jamestown, I made a bee-line for Pittsburg, a city that had taken my fancy because of its brisk business ways. They were brisk indeed. Grant's second campaign for the Presidency was in full swing. On my second night in town I went to hear Horace Greeley address an open-air meeting. I can see his noble old head yet above the crowd, and hear his opening appeal. Farther I never got. A marching band of uniformed shouters for Grant had cut right through the crowd. As it passed I felt myself suddenly seized; an oilcloth cape was thrown over my head, a campaign cap jammed after, and I found myself marching away with a torch on my shoulder to the tune of a brass band just ahead. How many others of Mr. Greeley's hearers fared as I did I do not know. The thing seemed so ludicrous (and if I must march I really cared very little whether it was for Greeley or Grant) that I stuck it out, hoping as we went to come somewhere upon my hat, which had been lost in the sudden attack; but I never saw it again.

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