CHARLES M. SHELDON

THE HIGH CALLING

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FOREWORD

The story, "The High Calling," was written at two different periods, in 1909 and 1910, and was read at two different periods, chapter by chapter, to the young people in my church, on successive Sunday evenings. The main purpose of the story is to illustrate the value of the average American family training and the final victory of the spiritual ideals over material or physical attractions. The final outcome of the struggle which Helen Douglas makes between her natural inclination to follow a life of ease and luxury, and the real training which she has received at home, is the picture of what is going on in the best American homes to-day. It has been my hope that the story would help many young people to realize the great difference between the finest type of manhood and womanhood, and that which in some cases has grown up on American soil, where the standards have been low and the ideals have been obscured by fashion, by false home training, and by superficial ideas of happiness. In other words, my purpose has been to describe, in the main characters in the book, the manly heroic type of Christian struggle and final victory which realizes the response which the higher nature makes to the call from above. This idea which runs through the story gives it its name of "The High Calling." As my own young people gave the story a beautiful reception in their listening to it, it is my earnest hope that if the book has the good fortune to find a larger audience it may reach more young people with the same message.

Topeka, Kansas, 1911. CHARLES M. SHELDON.

CHAPTER I

PAUL DOUGLAS and his wife, Esther, were holding a serious council together over their older boy, Walter.

"I can't help feeling a little disappointment over the way things are going. I did so want the boy to come into the office with me."

"I know," said Esther, with a grave smile, "but he seems to have his mind made up. I don't think we ought to thwart him if he is made to do that for his lifework."

"No," said Paul, looking at Esther with great thoughtfulness, "I have always believed that a boy should have freedom to choose his lifework. But what puzzles me is where did Walter get his leaning toward electrical engineering? None of my ancestors, so far as I know, ever had the slightest tendency that way, and the Darcys for generations have been business men.

"I was in the boy's room the other day," continued Paul, meditatively, "and he had the floor and his bed and the chairs covered with models of electrical machines. I was afraid to sit down or lean up against anything for fear it would go off and give me a shock or something. While I was asking questions, what did the boy do but start a contrivance that hung from the ceiling and it reached down a metallic arm that grabbed my hat off and began to comb my hair. I yelled, naturally, or unnaturally, and tried to get loose, but another contrivance shot out from the wall somewhere and clutched me by the leg and began to make frantic gestures at my shoes like a wild boot-blacking emporium. I decided to stand still rather than run the risk of getting hit somewhere else. Meanwhile Walter was laughing so hard he couldn't answer my emphatic request to know what the thing was going to do. He finally explained that it was a new device he was experimenting with to give the patient head treatment for nervous prostration, and black his shoes while he waited. I made him turn off the power and then I cautiously backed out of the room and gave him my testimonial on the efficacy of his invention adapted to give anyone nervous prostration and general paralysis who never had them."

Esther laughed, the same good, generous, contagious laugh she had always known, and Paul had always loved to hear.

"Walter is a genius. I always said he would make his mark."

"I was afraid he would make several on me before I could get away," said
Paul, smiling. "Well, of course, we have really decided to let the boy
go to Burrton. If he is going to have a thorough course in electricity,
I want him to have the best there is."

"I shall miss him dreadfully. O, dear, my darling!" Esther suddenly yielded to a good cry that somewhat upset Paul. Only once in a while in their married life had Esther given way to such a display of feeling. But before Paul went down to the office that morning she had dried her tears and with a hopeful smile prepared to make out a list of Walter's school necessities for the eight months he would be away from home.

Walter was twenty years old, tall and slim, with his father's features and his mother's voice, and a very strong liking for all scientific and mechanical work. He had within the year graduated from the Milton high school with honors in the physics department, and had at once set his ambition on going to Burrton Electrical and Engineering School, the best school of its kind in the East. His father had made him a tempting offer to come into the *News* office, but the boy had frankly told his father that if there was anything in the world he disliked it was a newspaper. So Paul, with a sigh of disappointment, had yielded to the inevitable and agreed to the Burrton plan, simply stipulating that Walter, who was disposed to be luxurious in his tastes, should make up his mind to a school course stripped of unnecessary expenses and devoted to the main thing.

"I am willing, of course, to help you with your education," he said, in a very plain, frank talk with Walter when the decision was finally made. "But I expect you to do something for yourself. The

Burrton catalogue mentions stewardships which students are allowed to choose in part payment of tuition. Isn't that so?"

Walter looked annoyed and answered his father sullenly.

"Yes, but the stewards at Burrton have to wash dishes and mess around the clubhouses doing odd jobs for the other fellows. It cuts them out of pretty much all the best social life of the school."

Paul looked at his oldest boy indignantly. If there was anything he ever feared it was that his children would grow up to despise manual labor and shrink from it.

"Do you mean to say you are not willing to do your honest part at honest work to get through school? Or do you mean to say, Walter, that the social part of the school is so important that you are going to make it count in your program for an education?"

"No." Walter looked anxious and his tone was changed. "I—well—I naturally don't want to be rated in a class below the rest—I–"

"Do you mean that the stewards at Burrton are looked down on for doing physical work? I understood you to say that Jack Alwin said every fellow at Burrton stood on his merits, and that real scholarship really counted. If I thought there was a spirit of toadyism or aristocracy at Burrton, I wouldn't let you go there."

"They are measured by scholarship," said Walter, in alarm now, lest his father would decide to withdraw his consent to the Burrton plan. "But, of course, if I go in with the stewards I can't expect to go out much, or—but I'm willing to apply for a place, father, I want to go. Don't change the plan, will you?"

"I want you to go, Walter. But I don't want you ever to think that the work of your hand is any less honorable than the work of your head. What little you do won't hurt you at all. And it makes no difference what others think. If you go to Burrton, you go to get an education. And perhaps one of the best parts of it will be in the training you receive outside of the classroom."

So Walter's ambition, so far as his school was concerned, was finally met, though secretly he chafed at the conditions imposed by his father, and when the day came for him to say goodbye and start on his journey of fifteen hundred miles he was not as happy as he should have been, anticipating his position in the school and feeling restless over the task it imposed. At the same time he was so eager to get on with his engineering that he would endure many hard and disagreeable experiences. Paul and Esther took leave of him at the station with a feeling, which they kept from being too sad on the boy's account, that he was going to face a new world and meet some overturning events in the course of the school year.

Helen Douglas, their second child, was eighteen, just entering Hope College, and beginning to face some questions that gave Paul and Esther much thought. She was a girl blessed with her mother's vigorous health, so overflowing with vitality that her mother said to her one day, "Helen, if you feel so strong and outbreaking, I don't know but I will let Jane go and put you in the kitchen."

"That's all right, mother," replied Helen, calmly. "You know I am going to be a professor of domestic science and I would just as soon practice on you and father and the boys as anybody. But I feel so well all the time I believe I would like to join a circus."

"Helen Douglas!" Esther said, shocked at her daughter's remark. And then she thanked God for the girl's abounding life. "There are so many sickly girls and women, Helen, you cannot be thankful enough for one of the most beautiful of all things, health."

"I am thankful, mother. You know I never even had a headache. Isn't it fine to be so well that you don't know what to do?"

Mrs. Douglas, however, had some serious thoughts of Helen, and at times she was anticipating possible sorrow for this creature with the strength and grace of some forest animal. Helen was careless and thoughtless in many ways, selfish and arbitrary in the home circle, although in many cases she was quickly penitent and ready to acknowledge her faults. She was inclined to be very critical and openly judged everyone, from the minister to her own father and mother. She was constantly calling

Louis to account for his failings, and one of Mrs. Douglas's daily crosses was due to the habit Helen had of provoking Louis, partly in a spirit of banter, partly because Louis offended the girl's nice feelings about certain customs and courtesies in polite society. There were great possibilities in Helen for a rich and rare womanhood, but many a hard fight ahead for her in the overcoming, and many humiliations perhaps for her sensitive soul before she reached the place of victory.

Louis was fifteen, just entered high school, a little backward with his studies on account of trouble with his eyes and a nervous attack which left him somewhat irritable and timid. He was an average boy, a great lover of his mother and a hero-worshipper toward his father. He was a handsome-looking boy who bade fair to develop into a business career of some sort, but with doubtful habits which would be settled one way or another as his nervous physical condition improved or grew worse. Paul watched him closely and counselled much with Esther over Louis, realising more as the boy grew that his case was one which called for much wisdom and care.

Two months after Walter's departure his father received a letter from him which he read aloud to Esther in the family circle. It was Paul's custom to take the whole family into his confidence in all matters that belonged to all, and the habit was one that strengthened the ties of comradeship among them.

"Dear father and mother and all," Walter wrote, using a phrase common to the Douglas children whenever they had been away from home. "I'm having the time of my life at Burrton and thought you might like to hear about it.

"There are about five hundred in the school and some pretty fine fellows. They come from fifteen different States and of course I haven't met many of them yet and don't expect to for some time.

"I can't say that I like the steward business. I have to wait on the swells at one of the fraternity houses and I don't like it. Father, I wish you would let me do something else for my expenses. I can't complain of any treatment of the fellows. They are all civil enough, but I can't help feeling the difference between us. You see some of the fellows come from swell families in New York and Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. Six of the tables waited on have suites at the club house that beat anything I ever saw. Their furniture is hand carved and one of the fellows has paintings in his room that cost ten thousand dollars. Half the upper classmen keep automobiles and dog kennels and spend a lot of money on wine suppers and spreads. You can see for yourself that I'm not in the same class with these fellows, but it must be fine to have money and not have to scheme how to get on.

"As for the work, I enjoy the plant all right. There isn't anything like this equipment anywhere else. Lots of the fellows are here to fit themselves for work on the Isthmus. A good many of them are going to fail out on the finals. For all it's a rich man's son's school it's only fair to say the standard is kept up and I am told that over fifty failed to get through last half. I have been fortunate enough to get a position under the assistant foreman in the coil shop and he has been kind enough to say that if I keep on as I have begun I may have a place in the new experiment division just planned under Wallace, the government expert recently sent here. If I can get this position it will carry a scholarship and in that case I suppose you will not object to my dropping the stewardship. It takes an awful lot of time and I don't like it a little bit.

"There is fine boating here on the Wild River and we have a great crew this season. We row against Brainerd Technology School three months from now. Nothing else is talked about just now. There isn't much doubt about our winning. Everyone knows that Carlisle, our stroke, is the strongest man that ever sat in a Burrton boat and we have never had such a crew for team work since the big race in 1891. There is lots of betting on the game and the odds are four to one on Burrton.

"Now father, you won't object, will you, to my dropping the steward work if I get the Wallace appointment. I have almost no time for anything now but digging. I don't care to be known just as 'dig,' but that is all I am so far. The scholarship will pay me twice as much as the work I'm doing and give me leisure for something besides digging. I haven't had time to be homesick, but I would give a lot to see you all.

"With much love from the constant 'digger.'

"WALTER DOUGLAS."

Paul's reply to this was brief, and characteristic of his insight where Walter was concerned. After assuring him that he had no objections to his leaving the stewardship in case the scholarship was open to him, he wrote:

"I notice you speak several times with more or less disparagement of the fact that you are getting to be a 'dig.'

"I understand by this word is meant that the student is actually applying himself with unusual enthusiasm or persistence in his studies. I also understand that it is in some schools a term of reproach and that a 'dig' is regarded as a slow fellow who has made the mistake of supposing a college is a place where scholarships may be acquired.

"Now, I don't want you to miss the social side of college life and all the jolly things that rightly belong to it. But if it comes to a choice between being a 'dig' and being a 'jolly fellow' in college, you need never hesitate concerning which one of these two we want you to be. The main object of a college course is an all-around manhood and a fitting of yourself for the best possible service in the world. The world does not need jolly good fellows so much as it needs persons who know how to do things, and do them right, and do them when they are most needed. Wine suppers don't add anything to the happiness or well-being of the world. And I hope you will live to see the time, if I don't, when the American college will cease to be a soft retreat for rich men's sons and be a real training school for service. Service is the great word, my boy. No man is truly educated who does not have that word at the center of both his heart and his head.

"I inclose a check for a hundred dollars and leave it to your judgment as to its use. I want you to have all that rightfully goes with the college course, and I hope you can get the scholarship if that will mean for you more leisure for all-around development. But I don't think the work you have done so far has hurt you any.

"All send love; your father,

"PAUL DOUGLAS."

Esther felt relieved to know Paul had sent Walter some money. She had feared the boy was working too hard.

"Not a bit," said Paul, stoutly. "The boys that work their way through are not hurt by it. Walter is perfectly well and strong. He is able to stand it."

"His tastes are very refined," murmured Esther. "I can understand how he feels about waiting on the table."

"Waiting on the table is a great business," said Paul. "What would happen to the old world if everybody now waiting on tables should refuse to do it any more? It would disarrange our civilisation more than a universal war. There is nothing finer or more needed than waiting on tables."

But there was one phrase in Walter's letter that Paul dwelt over after he had gone back to the office. Walter had written of the luxury in the rooms of the rich fellows, evidently with some spirit of envy, and closed his brief comment by saying:

"You can see for yourself I am not in the same class with these fellows, but it must be fine to have money and not have to scheme how to get on."

Paul had a perfect horror of money-loving, of soft and toadying habits, of the worship of style and society, and nonsense of high life generally. Nothing cut him deeper at heart than the feeling, as Walter grew up, that the boy had a streak in his character somewhere of the very thing that his father detested. It was this knowledge of a weakness in Walter that led to Paul's great desire to give the boy another Standard, to impress on him the nobility of labor and the disgrace of getting something for nothing. The one thing so far that was saving Walter from becoming a victim to his luxurious tastes was his real love of scientific knowledge and his desire to make of himself a first-class engineer. Paul

counted on this factor to keep Walter steady to the main thing, but he realised as he read the boy's letter that there were influences in the Burrton school powerfully pulling him in other directions, away from the simple and plain habits he had always known at home.

Walter's next letter acknowledged with much evident gratitude the receiving of the money his father had sent and spoke again of the scholarship opening. That matter, however, would not be settled until a trying out of several applicants for the honour.

Two months later Paul received a short letter from Walter, written evidently in some bitterness, saying the scholarship had been finally given to an upper class man, "one with a pull," Walter declared, adding, "I shall have to keep at the steward business, I suppose. I can't make much more than my board at it, father, and the midterm tuition is due in two weeks. I haven't money enough to settle. My laboratory fees have been doubled since Wallace came in with his expert division work and expenses generally are heavy."

Paul replied by sending Walter another check and writing as encouragingly to him as possible. Walter answered briefly and seemed to be feeling somewhat more reconciled to the disappointment connected with the scholarship matter.

Two weeks later Paul had a letter from the publisher of one of his books, asking him to come East on business relating to the book. He decided hastily to go on and found he could visit Burrton school on the way. He wrote Walter of his intention, giving him the date of the day he should probably reach Burrton. Esther, Helen, and Louis sent many special messages and Paul was glad of an opportunity to see Walter in his school surroundings.

When he reached Burrton it happened to be the date of the great boat race with the Brainerd Technology School. For several stations before the train reached Burrton, crowds came aboard for the college town. When Paul reached Burrton an immense and yelling mob filled the station and swarmed out to the racing course at the meadows, below the school grounds.

Walter was watching for his father, and in the excitement at the time Paul did not note what he afterward could not help marking. When the two were finally seated on the great bank of seats at the end of the river course, just before the crews were given the signal to start, Paul thought to himself he had never seen Walter so nervous or so ill at ease. He attributed it all at first to the general excitement, but the more he looked at Walter and the more he watched his actions, the less he could account for them, even making allowance for all the unusual outbursts of hilarious feeling on the part of two great schools met in rivalry.

"I never thought about the date of the boat race, Walter, when I left home. I'll be glad to see it. I haven't seen a boat race since the Harvard-Yale contest in ninety-three."

"It's going to be a great race, father. We're sure to win, don't you think? Carlisle is a power. We can't lose, can we?"

"You know more about it than I do, of course."

"But they say Brainerd has a great crew. I don't believe they can beat us, though, do you?"

"I don't know a thing about it, Walter. Naturally, I'll yell for Burrton with you."

"We'll win, I think. Yes, I'm sure we will."

Walter grew more and more nervous as the time slipped away and the signal was hoisted up the river that in five minutes the race would be on. His father looked at him curiously, conscious that the boy was unduly excited over something more than the race.

But when the signal went up, Douglas was absorbed with all the rest of the howling, jumping, gesticulating crowd of undergraduates.

A gun went off up the river. The white smoke puff rose gracefully above the trees on the bank. The course was a straight-away three miles. Two thin black streaks side by side on the water began to move toward the red and green goal posts, and the great race was on. The minute the starting gun was fired, Paul saw Walter lean forward and put his face in his hands. He then lifted his head, put both hands on the rail of the seat in front of him, and gazed up the river with a look so intense that

even the faces about him by contrast were calm. Paul found himself looking oftener at Walter than at the race. From where they sat it was impossible to tell which crew was in the lead. The black streaks up the river grew more distinct and another gun fired sent the news along the course that the first mile of the race had been covered, with Burrton slightly in the lead.

CHAPTER II

WHEN the gun marked the second mile of the race there was not a quarter of a boat's length distance between Burrton and Brainerd, but Burrton was leading. By a system of flag signals, the spectators on the grandstand at the end of the course were informed of the relative situation of the two crews at every quarter mile. Both crews were apparently in good condition and rowing in splendid form. The last mile was always the hardest fought. As the boats began to enter the last quarter of this mile, the excitement rose to the highest pitch. First Burrton made a spurt that put them a boat's length ahead of their rivals. Then Brainerd responded to its coxswain's call and closed up the gap, gradually lapping its bow past the stern of the Burrton shell. Then Burrton drew away again for half a boat's length. Brainerd doggedly clung to that position for a short distance and then began slowly to fall behind, as the boats shot into the last eighth of the mile. Only a hundred yards now, and the race was won for Burrton. Pandemonium reigned on the seats at the goal post end of the course. Shouts of "Carlisle! Carlisle!" rose up through the din of megaphones and screech of whistles from the launches. Paul looked at Walter. The boy had risen, flung his hat up anywhere and was waving his arms like a maniac, screaming out the name of Carlisle, the crack stroke of Burrton. And then, without a second's warning, the big stroke, the hero of the Burrton crew, whose name was on a thousand tongues, suddenly bent forward and collapsed over his oar. The oar itself crashed into the line and the Burrton boat lurched over on the opposite side.

"Row on, row on!" screamed the Burrton coxswain. "Only ten yards to the green and red post."

But Brainerd shot by grimly, her bow slipped past the crippled shell and across the line, a winner by more than a length, and the race was over.

For the first few seconds the Burrton crowd did not realise what had happened. The Burrton's shell swung up sideways to the referee's boat and the crew sat sullenly stooping over their oars. Carlisle lay in a huddled heap, a sorry spectacle for a school hero, while the coxswain scooped up handfuls of water and flung them over him.

Then a hubbub of questions rent the air.

"How did it happen?"

"Are we really beaten?"

"Did Brainerd foul?"

"Was Carlisle doped?"

"What was it? Half a length?"

"Ours by a fluke."

"Who was to blame?"

Added to all the rest, Paul was smitten with the torrent of profanity that burst from scores of Burrton men as the truth that they were beaten began to come forcibly home to them. Paul had lived long enough to know that the passion of gambling always rouses the worst exhibitions of human selfishness. But it was a new revelation to him to see these smartly dressed rich men's sons cursing God and profaning the name of Christ because they had bet heavily on their boat crew and lost. In the midst of all their oaths the name of Carlisle came in for heavy scoring. From the heights of the most extravagant hero-worship he had suddenly tumbled into this cesspool of profane unpopularity. All of which goes to prove any number of useful things, among them the necessity, if you are going to be stroke oar of a boat crew, it is best if you would retain your popularity to keep in training until the season is over, and even then it is not certain that you will always escape the other extreme of being overtrained.

But Paul's attention was speedily directed to Walter. The boy looked perfectly dazed as the final result of the race broke upon him. After two or three eager questions put wildly to those nearest him, he had sunk upon the seat, and when his father spoke to him he did not at first seem to hear.

Then he roused up and slowly went down off the stand and walked along by his father like one going to execution.

It was a characteristic of Paul Douglas to go straight at a difficulty or a question and make a frank and honest attempt to clear away all mystery and trouble.

He saw plainly that some unusual thing was agitating Walter. The boy was under some great stress of feeling and could not conceal it.

So when the two were back in Walter's room, Paul at once began to seek the cause of the boy's trouble.

"What is the matter with you, Walter? You have not been yourself all day."

Walter was very white, and what he said to his father's question was so inaudible that Paul could not understand it.

"What is the matter with you, Walter? Are you sick? Tell me," said his father sharply.

"I can't, father, I can't," Walter stammered and looked so wretched that his father said more gently:

"Don't be afraid of me. Speak out if you are in any trouble. I want to help you. Don't you know that, Walter?"

"Yes, but–"

"Has it any thing to do with money matters? Tell me."

"Yes, I can't! Can't do it, father. I don't mean–"

And then Walter broke down completely. He laid his head down on his arms and cried hysterically. Paul sat looking at him sternly. For the first time that day an inkling of the truth began to dawn on him. At first it did not seem possible to him that his boy could do such a thing. It was so incredible to him at first that he sat silently eyeing the bowed head with an entirely new and bitter feeling.

When he finally spoke it was with a slow and steady measure of speech revealing great self-restraint.

"Did you bet on the race? Is that what's the matter?"

Walter lifted up his head and looked with a terrified face at his father.

"O father, don't be hard on me! I felt so sure we would win! I didn't see any risk! And all the fellows in Burrton bet on the race. A fellow isn't considered loyal to the school unless he bets something."

"How much did you lose?"

"I put up that last one hundred you sent me and fifty more."

"When do you have to pay?"

"I suppose at once. That's the rule."

"What other debts have you?"

Walter hesitated; then he said feebly, "I owe five week's board and some items at the men's furnishing."

"How much will it all come to?"

"I don't know."

"About how much?"

"About seventy-five dollars."

"When do you have to pay that?"

"There's no hurry. It can wait."

"Do you mean to say that a bet, a gambling debt, an obligation made on a dishonourable basis, takes precedence in time over honest claims for food and clothing?"

"It's the rule here in Burrton," said Walter sullenly. "If a bet is not settled at once the fellows lose their standing. The same is true at all the eastern schools. You have got to meet debts of honour promptly."

"Debts of dishonour, you mean."

"That isn't the standard here, father. The standard at Burrton is different from the one at home."

"I see it is," replied Paul, drily. "But the one at home is–" he paused, rose from his seat and went over by the window and stood there looking out over the school campus.

Paul Douglas had had in his fifty years of life many interesting and profoundly moving experiences, but it is doubtful if in all his life he had faced anything which stirred him so deeply as this. His high standard of conduct made him loathe the entire gambling transaction. It was agony to him to find that his own son was swept off his feet by a custom which had nothing except common custom to excuse it. Above all, Paul felt the bitterness that comes to a father when he realises that the careful teaching of years has been deliberately disobeyed or ignored. There was a mingling of bitterness and shame and anger and sorrow and heartache in Paul that Walter could not possibly understand as he sat there looking dully at his father's broad back and wondering what his father would do.

After what seemed like an hour, Paul turned around.

"Give me an itemised account of your obligations outside of your gambling expenses."

"I don't call it gambling to bet on the races," said Walter half defiantly.

"It make no difference what you call it," said Paul sternly. "What is all betting but trying to get something for nothing, and what is that but gambling? Every boy in Burrton who bet on the race is a gambler?"

"The authorities never say anything against it," said Walter sullenly. "The president knows that thousands of dollars are put up at every race and he never has said a word about it."

"We will not argue about it," said Paul coldly. "Give your accounts, your honest accounts, with the tradesmen here and then pack up your things."

"O father, you don't mean–"

"Pack up your things. We leave for Milton in the morning."

Walter took out of a drawer the bills which had accumulated there and without a word handed them over to his father. Paul summed up and found a total of $81.

"Is that all?"

"Yes, except my tuition for this last half."

"How much is that?"

"Forty dollars."

"Is that all?"

"Yes."

"I'll settle this all up. You can begin packing while I am out."

Paul took the bills and went out abruptly, not concealing from Walter, what was very apparent, that he was tremendously angry.

He went to the various tradesmen and settled the accounts, went to the boarding place and paid the arrears and after some difficulty on account of the holiday, finally succeeded in settling the tuition at the school office.

He then asked the way to the president's house, and on presenting himself at the door was invited to go into the reception room and wait for a few moments.

The president was having a call from some old classmates who had come down to Burrton to see the race. When they went out, the president accompanied them to the door. Paul could not avoid hearing one of the visitors say, "I put up my last dollar on Burrton. May have to borrow to get out of town."

"Don't borrow of me," said the president, laughing. "I've never been able to get back what you owed me at Cambridge."

There was some jesting reply in the familiar language of old college chums and the visitors went out.

The president came into the reception room and greeted Douglas heartily. He had heard of him, had read some of his stories and was glad he had a son at Burrton.

"It's my son I came to see you about, President Davis," said Paul quietly, when he had returned the president's hearty greeting. "I am going to take him out of the school and I thought it was only fair to you that I tell you frankly why."

"Going to take him out! I'm sorry to hear it."

"But the atmosphere of Burrton does not seem to agree with my son." Paul frankly told the president the incident of Walter's bet and the consequences, without any care to hide the facts of his own intense convictions on the matter of betting which he mentioned several times as "gambling."

President Davis listened gravely and before Paul was through, his face had reddened deeply more than once. Paul spoke very bluntly and it was plain to be seen that he was under a great stress of feeling in which was mingled a real, deep, strong anger, a part of which was directed against the Burrton school and its management.

"And so," Paul said as he finished his statement, "I don't care to keep my son in an institution where the standards are so low that a gambling habit like betting is not even discouraged by the authorities."

"How do you know it is not discouraged?"

"My boy tells me that during his whole stay here he has not heard a word of disapproval or protest against this prevalent habit."

The president turned to a bookcase near by and took down a small volume entitled "Chapel Talks." He opened it at a certain page and without a word pointed to a passage.

Paul read it. "There is a prevalent idea in the school that in order to be loyal to Burrton the students must all stand together, no matter what is done by the student body. That idea is false and in the end it is harmful to the best interests of the school.

"Take for example the custom of betting on the athletics and especially on the annual boat race. This is a custom which should be discouraged by every lover of the school. Betting is gambling; it is an attempt to get something for nothing. That attempt is destructive to morals and dangerous to character. The fact that many of the alumni who come to see the games bet on them is no reason why the undergraduates should bet on the games. I look to every student to discourage this practice and use his influence to help abolish a harmful and dangerous habit."

Paul looked up from the reading and eyed the president with a new feeling of respect.

"I beg pardon for judging you, sir, without knowing all the facts. But this volume was published over a year ago. My boy never heard these chapel talks. I take it that there has been nothing said about betting here for several months."

"No, perhaps not," replied the president with some hesitation. "But the students generally know my views on the matter. That knowledge, however, does not stop the betting."

"Why can't you put an end to it by forbidding it altogether?"

In reply to Paul's question, President Davis smiled.

"How much power do you think the president of an American college has,

Mr. Douglas?"

"Why, I suppose he has enough to stop things that are absolutely wrong."

"Pardon me, Mr. Douglas, but he has no such power. He may try to stop them, but his power to do so may be very limited. For a year the great president of Harvard, Dr. Charles Eliot, did his best to abolish or amend football in that university. As head of the institution he spoke out against the game, which he honestly believed to be brutal and demoralising. What was the result of his protest? It had no influence toward abolishing the game and very little, if any, toward modifying it. The fact is our colleges and universities are just now controlled in a large measure by the opinion of those who support them. In other words, the alumni in many colleges run the college, not the president or the officers. I may say to you frankly that such is the case at Burrton. Two of the visitors who were here

a few minutes ago are really more influential with the board of trustees than I am. They are heavy contributors. One of them gave us a gymnasium last year. They are very fond of athletics. Both of them are betting men. It would be a very difficult task to regulate the athletics in Burrton in opposition to these alumni; so there you are, as to a president's influence. All this in confidence, Mr. Douglas."

"It must be great fun to be president of a university," said Paul in disgust. "It seems to me if I were president of this school I should want to be president, especially in matters of conduct and morals."

"You would see it differently if you were president," said Davis with a faint smile. "Among other difficulties that we face here is the fact that Burrton, being unusually well equipped for technical high-class preparation in electrical engineering, is a favorite school for the difficult sons of rich men who do not know how to get on elsewhere. We have on our hands the greatest of all problems—how to make useful men out of a class of individuals who from boyhood have been reared in habits of the most princely luxury and disregard of all rules of restraint. The fact that we don't toady to all these rich men is seen in the records, which show during the year over two hundred men suspended for failure to meet the Standard requirements. And as to the betting, Mr. Douglas, your boy has now learned his lesson and will not do that again. Hadn't you better reconsider? Will he find conditions any different or any better in any other school that you know? Do you know any college East or West where the student atmosphere is absolutely free from all evil customs and habits?"

"I must confess I don't," said Paul, slowly. "I don't mind saying that this action of my son's has made me very angry. Still, I don't deny that it might have happened in any one of a dozen colleges in any part of the country. A large part of my grievance was because it seemed to me and, pardon me, seems yet, that the institution was to blame for keeping so still about these things, and doing so little to create a different moral Standard. But I'm not asking Burrton to take all the blame. My boy has got to take his punishment, and I don't know of a better one than to take him home."

"I hope you won't resort to that measure," said the president, earnestly. "Your son has unusual talent. He holds the highest place in the shops for original research. Give him another chance. It is my opinion that he will not disappoint you again."

"Perhaps not," answered Paul as he rose to go. "But I have about made up my mind."

"I hope you'll change it," said the president as Paul went away.

"Perhaps," answered Paul briefly.

He walked slowly back to Walter's room, asking many questions as he went along. His talk with the president had given him another angle from which to judge the boy's conduct. He could not hide from himself that his heart was sore over the whole matter, because he had never dreamed that his own boy would fall before a temptation which he had so often heard his father condemn at home. Paul Douglas was humiliated, as a man always is when his children begin to show the bad habits he has been fond of criticising in other people's children. And he had not yet been able to find any reasonable excuse for Walter.

When he went into the room he found Walter packing things up and evidently with no purpose of remonstrating or trying to change his father's decision.

"There's a letter from mother," he said briefly as Paul came up to the table in the middle of the room.

"You want me to read it?"

"Yes."

Paul sat down to read and Walter went on with his packing.

"Dear Walter," Esther wrote, "I am so glad your father has this opportunity to visit you and I presume he is at Burrton now. You will have good times together and I am envying him the privilege. I have missed you, boy, more than you can imagine. But then you will never know how much your mother has depended on you here at home. You were always so thoughtful and kind, how can I help missing my eldest.

"I have been thinking a good deal lately about the different standards that prevail in different places and I have no doubt you have noticed that some of the things we have always taught you here at home are not held by others in the school where you now are. I believe you will be able to decide fairly when it is necessary as to what is right and wrong and not allow the fact of a different Standard to confuse your judgment. I simply want you to know, Walter, that I have the utmost confidence in you. I am proud of my boy's ability. I expect you will make one of the finest engineers in the United States, and better yet, one of the finest men in the world.

"What do you think has been the great event of the last week? Helen had a young man caller two nights ago. It was the oldest son of Judge Randolph on Chandos street. The boy is a little younger than Helen, I think. He called in a formal way and to hear him talk to Helen convulsed me. I finally had to retire, but Helen was furious with me after young Randolph went away. The child was very much disturbed and claims to despise the youth, etc. It was like the story I was reading the other day:

"A young man had been calling now and then on a young lady, when one night as he sat in the parlour waiting for her to come down, her mother entered the room instead, and asked him in a very grave, stern way what his intentions were. He turned very red and was about to stammer some incoherent reply when suddenly the young lady called down from the head of the stairs: 'Mamma, mamma, that is not the one.'

"But, oh dear. Must I realise 'old age is creeping on apace' when my girl begins to have gentlemen callers? Helen will have many admirers. She is a girl who has very decided views and is very frank to express them. Now don't tease her when you write her, for this is in confidence. You must not betray me.

"Louis is doing very well now at school. His headaches trouble him some. I am giving him a course of careful training. He was much interested in the set of models you sent him. It was good of you to remember him. He admires you vastly. Don't forget that, boy, will you?

"You must come home for the holidays. We want the family all together then. Make your plans accordingly.

"All send love, and most of all, your Mother."

Paul finished the letter and laid it down. He sat there for a while in
silence. Walter did not venture to break it. Finally Paul said: "Walter,
I've been thinking over this affair and perhaps I have a new look at it.
I want to tell you about it."

A light came into Walter's face which had been fixed and dogged and he got up from in front of his trunk where he had been kneeling and came up to the table.

"Sit down there," said Paul gravely. Walter sat down opposite his father, and the two, father and son, looked at each other earnestly across the table.

CHAPTER III

PAUL DOUGLAS was trying to think of his own boyhood and his temptations as he faced his own son on that memorable afternoon. His anger at the boy had almost subsided. The feeling that remained was a feeling of grief and fear mingled at the anticipation of a failure on Walter's part to realise the grave nature of the crisis through which he was passing.

"I've been thinking over all this, Walter," Paul began slowly, "and I am willing you should remain here on certain conditions."

"Oh, father, I'll do anything," Walter began impulsively.

"Let me state them," his father went on gravely. "They may seem hard to you. But I'm older than you and have a right to expect obedience if the terms are just.

"In the first place I shall expect you to earn the amount you have incurred with your gambling and repay me. Is that fair?"

"Yes," Walter spoke, wincing at his father's use of the word. "I wish you would not say 'gambling' father. It was a friendly wager. It is the regular college custom."

"I do not care what you call it or what the custom is here," said Paul, his anger beginning to flame up. "The wager, the custom, the whatever you call it, is gambling. It is gambling as much as any custom at Monte Carlo or any of the gambling halls of Europe. The principle is the same always; it is the desire and the hope of getting something for nothing, a thing totally contrary to every divine law of life. Don't you see it, Walter? Do you think I would be so much disturbed about the matter if it were of little account?"

"No, I suppose not."

Paul looked at the boy with growing earnestness. It was not reassuring to consider the possibility of his boy growing up with blunted ideals, with feeble convictions and a faint sense of the eternal difference between sharp cut right and wrong. The most sorrowful experience in Paul Douglas's life might be coming to him at this time if he should find his own son lacking in the real essentials of moral earnestness.

"Then," he went on, "another condition of your remaining here is that you promise me never to bet on anything again."

Walter interrupted eagerly, "You don't need to worry over that. I've learned my lesson. You don't think I feel especially drawn towards that sort of thing, do you?"

"I hope not," said Paul with a feeling of relief. There was a pause. Then Paul said as he picked up Esther's letter, "You will write mother. I'll leave it to you to tell her what you think you ought. But she is building great castles on your estate, my boy. Don't disappoint her, will you?"

"No, father, I won't," Walter replied in a low voice. There was another pause and then Paul said cheerfully, "I must go back on the night train. It's only fair to you to say that President Davis paid you a fine compliment speaking of your rank in the engineering department. We all expect great things of you in that line." Walter coloured with pleasure at the statement.

"They've got a great equipment here, father. That was the first reason I felt awfully bad to leave. I don't believe there is another school like Burrton for electrical engineering."

Paul rose to go and Walter went with him down to the station. Paul's parting word was affectionate and hopeful.

"Do your best, boy, and don't forget to pray."

Walter remembered that brief but serious appeal a long time. His father had not often talked religious matters with him. At the same time Walter had grown up with a strong impression of his father's own religious character and without much having been said he had always had the deepest respect for his father's splendid Christian character. That same evening he wrote home to his mother. Under the influence of his father's treatment of his conduct he made a full and frank confession of

his actions but at one point he could not help saying, "I told father I did not feel as if the bet was such an awful thing on account of it being a regular custom here at Burrton. You know I've written before about the Standard being different. But father was all upset by it. Mother, I don't think I have any temptation to gamble as a regular thing, and I have promised never to bet again, but you know I like nice things and I wanted the money so I wouldn't have to bone quite so hard. Father is good to me to let me stay on. I don't know what I would have done if he had taken me out. There is no other school quite up to this for equipment and I'm not fit for anything else. I'm working on a new lamp for city street lighting. We are allowed so many hours a week for original study and research. I can't describe my work and you would not understand it if I did. But my problem is to find a way of making an electric arc light which will go without an expensive mechanism and be self-regulating without machinery. There is a German student in my class by the name of Felix Bauer who is working at the same problem. Bauer is a good friend of mine and we have our laboratory tables in the same number. Now, mother, you won't think I am altogether depraved, will you? I am planning to stick close to work from now on. I don't want to disappoint you and father and I don't believe I shall. But you will remember, won't you, that the Standard here is different from the one at home in many ways. For example, mother, most of the fellows talk very freely and even coarsely about girls, and a good many of the rich set have pictures of actresses in their rooms and tell stories about them that I can't repeat. All that disgusts me and I have never heard anyone utter any protest in a crowd where the stories are going around. You see the Standard is different here. And I told father of a number of other customs that are different from those we are used to at home. There is a different atmosphere about everything. I can't describe it exactly, but I can feel the difference. I don't believe there is very much of what we know at home as 'spiritual life.' There are some fine fellows here and some high ambitions, but the chapel service is all voluntary, and only a handful of fellows ever go unless some big gun comes to give a chapel talk, and then the president allows only fifteen minutes for the whole service.

"What you wrote about Helen having a beau was funny. I can't imagine what Helen will do when the callers begin to come. Well, mother, I want you to think of me as too busy with my work to get into any more trouble. I am awfully interested, especially in the original problem—I believe I almost stumbled on the making of a successful arc light, without a regulating mechanism, a few days ago. I have been dreaming over it ever since and I am quite confident it can be done. Felix Bauer said the other day he thought he had it all right, but the plan escaped him. It's exciting, mother, to keep trying different combinations, not knowing any minute when you may hit on a new discovery. I hope Louis is behaving himself in his studies. I am sending him by mail a time switch that he asked me about.

"Much love to all. Your affectionate son

"WALTER."

Esther read this letter over carefully twice, and then, as her habit was, answered it almost immediately. It was a part of her training of her children that she had frankly taken them into her confidence when they were little and had had the wisdom and courage to discuss with them the questions that were really vital to their bodies and minds. There was one reason Walter wrote as frankly to his mother as he did about everything, knowing she would understand exactly. And that was the reason his mother in her turn could write as she did in reply, entering fully into the boy's real life.

She did not take much time to reproach him for the betting incident, believing that Paul had emphasised that quite strongly, but she did express the hope that her son would not be afraid to be independent of surroundings and stand on his own feet and have his own convictions, and then she went on to say: "One of the hardest things you will have to do all your life is to be independent. This will take more courage often than for a woman to be out of fashion. But there isn't a finer thing in all the world than an independent soul, one that knows the right and does it even if the whole world around is doing exactly the other thing. If the coarse stories you mention are told in your presence you don't have to join in the laugh over them. There is a number of ways in which you can clearly make

those fellows understand your attitude in that matter and of course you have the right and privilege of guarding yourself from any talk of that sort in your own room. Your room is your castle. Guard it from impurity. I feel as if almost any kind of wrong could be excused in a young man who has the virtue of a pure heart and maintains constant respect for womankind. But, if I ever gave you any advice about the choice of a friend, I think I should be quite safe in saying to you, be very slow to accept into the sacred place of your friendship any young man who talks with impure lips of womanhood. Such a man is a blight on all he touches.

"I trust you, Walter, to make the most of your opportunities and make us all proud of you. Success to the arc lamp. Write us the minute you succeed. Tell me more about the German schoolmate. We are interested in him and somehow I feel from the little you have told us of him that he is a fine young fellow.

"Helen is very dignified about her callers. There is nothing more to tell about her."

"All send love, most of all, mother."

When Paul reached home he told Esther somewhat in detail the incidents of the boat race and his interview with the president. He was hopeful for Walter and believed the boy had learned his lesson and would not fail at that point again. But he could not understand the particular "streak," as he called it, in Walter's make up, which seemed to demand expensive and needless luxuries.

"The boy had bought a very elaborate dresser. It was quartered oak and had a number of patent arrangements about it that made it unusually expensive. Walter confessed it cost him forty-seven dollars. This was one of the things he went in debt for. It seems he had become enamoured of just such a dresser in one of the rooms he had been caring for, a suite belonging to Van Shaw, the son of the steel magnate at Allworth. Of course, we want our son to go through school with all the comforts around him necessary for his proper culture and education. But I cannot see for the life of me how a forty-seven dollar quartered oak dresser is going to make any more of a man of him, especially when he goes in debt for it. I told him so and to my disappointment he took what I said rather badly. That is, he flared up some and seemed hurt at my criticism of his luxurious habits. But it isn't the luxurious tastes I object to so much as the reckless and inexcusable act of going in debt for such a thing; that is perfectly inexcusable. Where did Walter get his tastes, do you suppose?"

"Oh, dear, I don't know," said Esther with a sigh. "You know Louis used to have just a streak in him. Perhaps some of my ancestors on father's side were French aristocrats before the revolution. You know the Darcys had estates in southern France in the sixteenth century. I don't believe any more than you do, Paul, that a forty-seven dollar dresser is at all necessary to Walter's education. He will have to learn better ways. We must not forget his splendid good qualities in other directions. He has a great many. I can't believe he is going to disappoint us."

"No, I can't believe that," said Paul gravely. "But the boy has much to learn and I hope he will learn it without unnecessary suffering."

It was this same week, two days after the receipt of his mother's letter, that Walter had an unusual and rather dramatic opportunity to act on his mother's advice, in the matter of asserting his rights about the kind of conversation he would permit in his own room.

Walter had very little acquaintance with Van Shaw and the rich men's sons' set at Burrton. But incidentally it had come out during his chance meeting with Van Shaw that Walter's mother was a Darcy. The Darcys were at the time immensely influential at Allworth, Van Shaw's home. The fact that Walter was doing manual labor at Burrton did not affect his social standing very seriously, as at the time, there had not come into Burrton the social stigma against a student working his way through which had already come into several state universities and technical schools in this country. Besides, there was in all of Walter's make up that indefinable stamp of high breeding and refinement, helped on by an unusually attractive and handsome bearing, which made him look distinguished in any group of young men. When he had put on his best suit before the forty-seven dollar dresser and come out

on the rare occasions when he could spare time for some function, he was in many ways the most elegant person in all the company.

Van Shaw had gradually taken a peculiar attitude toward Walter, partly of recognition of his family and its antecedents and partly of patronage, as if he took for granted Walter would welcome his attentions. As a matter of fact, Walter resented Van Shaw's bearing toward him, but in his weakness and his leaning toward the upper society he envied, Walter endured what otherwise he would have been ashamed to acknowledge. On two occasions it had been a relief to Walter to be of help to Van Shaw in the electrical rooms. And on the particular occasion we are now to describe Van Shaw had come into Walter's room one evening to ask him about a point in connection with some original work which had to do with the winding of a single phase alternator.

While they were talking over the problem and Walter was trying to make Van Shaw see how important it was to take account of the position induced in the several turns and the fact of the reaction of the armature current, half a dozen other fellows dropped in. Walter was quite popular and not infrequently eight or ten students might be found in his rooms, as on this occasion.

Van Shaw was soon in possession of all Walter's knowledge on the subject, for he was bright enough mentally, and he carelessly sauntered over to the dresser and made a comment on it. Then he noticed a picture of Helen Douglas, a new one which Helen had sent Walter within the last few days.

"Sister, isn't she?" asked Van Shaw.

Walter nodded.

"Mighty handsome girl. Hope she'll visit you some time," said Van Shaw, as he picked up the photograph and started to pass it around among the other fellows.

There was something so offensive in the tone and manner of Van Shaw that Walter, who was standing near him, intercepted the picture before anyone in the room could take it. He put it back into its place without a word.

Van Shaw laughed.

"Say, maybe she isn't your sister, either. That makes me think," and before Walter could realise what he was doing, Van Shaw had begun a questionable story, while the group in the room sat and lounged around with looks of anticipated amusement.

Walter Douglas will never forget that scene and his part in it if he lives a hundred years. Van Shaw was leaning up against the dresser, in a vain way mindful of the impression he was about to make, when Walter interrupted him. Walter was very pale and what he said came from lips that trembled with a mingling of anger, and fear of the result.

"Wait! I would rather you would not tell that story in my room."

Van Shaw could not have been more astonished if Walter had pointed a gun at him. The rest of the company simply stared in the most profound silence at Walter. Ten or fifteen seconds ticked away. Then Van Shaw, who had turned very red in the face, said, slowly: "I don't know as you have anything to say about this. I don't intend to let a good story go untold."

"You don't tell it here in my room."

"I don't? Who will prevent it?"

"I will."

Van Shaw turned a little toward Walter. Douglas was smaller, shorter, and of lighter build in every way than himself. But he was in the real point of vantage, in his own room. The other students did not seem disposed to take any sides in the matter. But one of them said: "Oh, cut it out, Van, if Douglas doesn't like it. A fellow has a right to say what he wants in his own room. It's only a matter of taste anyhow."

Van Shaw looked at Walter savagely. Then he sauntered across the room.

"Come out in the hall, fellows, and I'll finish there. This air is too pious for my health."

Some of the boys laughed, and three or four fellows followed Van Shaw out. The rest stayed. When the door shut on Van Shaw, one of the older students, who had been silent throughout, walked

up to Walter and shook hands with him. Then the rest of the group followed. Not a word was said by anyone. These youths, some of them already hardened by dissipation, had at least the native good sense not to mar the occasion by any silly attempt at words. They simply shook Walter's hand and went out. And when the last one was gone, Walter turned the key in his door and went into his bedroom adjoining, and flung himself down on the bed and cried.

I don't know that he could have given any real reason for his emotion. But he was somewhat unstrung by the event. And a number of tumultuous feelings were stirring deeply in him. He turned hot and cold at the thought of his own possible cowardice. And then he felt a reaction of shame in the thought that after this, Van Shaw and all his set would cut him dead. He was ashamed to feel, even after all he had done, that he still shrank from the possibility of social scorn, even from a set of men who had no more moral standing than Van Shaw had.

But, on the whole, having stood by his rights as he had, and having the pleasant consciousness of being true to his own principles, he was disposed to feel a glow of commendation, and later in the evening as Helen's splendid picture looked at him almost as if she was present, Walter said to himself: "I'm glad I spoke out. I'm glad."

And then, because he had been brought up from a small boy to confide in his mother, he found great relief for his feelings that same night in writing to her. He mentioned no names, simply said that curiously soon after his mother had written as she did about guarding his own room from evil talk he had had an opportunity to do it. He did not dwell upon the matter at all, and did not take any special credit to himself for his action, but simply reminded his mother again of the difference in standards and conduct. He expressed gratitude that some of the fellows had at least silently stood by him. And he ended his letter by saying that he was almost on the edge of discovery of the arc light, although it still eluded him.

For the next two weeks Walter was completely absorbed in his studies. Every spare hour he could get he pored and worked over his original problem. There were points about it which perplexed and exasperated him. Felix Bauer was as hard at work on the same problem as himself, and said one evening with a good-natured laugh that he believed he had mastered it. "All I lack is that one thing necessary what we call the 'Beduerfniss' the '*einege gewolite*,'" said Bauer, as he took off his shop cap and thoughtfully ran a lead pencil back and forth through the short curly hair over his ear.

"That's all I lack," said Walter. "If I could get your '*einege gewolite,*' I would have my answer."

"Hope you will get it," said Bauer, pleasantly, as he closed up his locker and went out to meet another class period.

After he had gone, Walter worked on until he was the only person left in the workroom. He had the entire afternoon and evening, as it happened, and was so absorbed in his experiments that he was hardly aware of his being alone until he looked up and saw that the big room was empty, and that it was dusk. Without any thought of supper he turned on the light over his table and made some mathematical calculations. Then he ran out of paper and looked about over the litter of stuff in front of him for another piece, but not finding any, glanced naturally over to Bauer's table, which was next his own.

There was a folded bit of paper there, and Walter reached out for it, took it, and opened it up. It was covered on one side with some drawings and diagrams, and as Walter looked at them, not paying much attention at first, as he worked a high power formula over in his head, a little at a time it dawned on him as he continued to stare at Bauer's drawings, that without having realised it himself, perhaps, Bauer had actually suggested in his own drawing the key to the arc light Walter had been puzzling over for several months without success.

"Yes! yes!" Walter was saying, excitedly, to himself. "I see it! I see it! What a dummy I was. The electrodes can be fitted with teeth at equal distances. Let the tooth rest on the porcelain plate. It will gradually soften and melt under the heat of the arc. Then—then. I see! I see—the electrode will, or it ought to, drop down of its own weight upon the next tooth. Then that will melt and the electrode

will drop again. The two electrodes can be coupled together with a scissors coupling, so the teeth will have to be made in only one of them. I see the whole thing! Hurrah!" He said the last word out loud. The echo of it in the big, empty shop startled him. The glow of the discoverer, of the inventor, was on him and within him. Then he received a distinct reaction. That was Bauer's paper, not his! He had left it out of the locker when he went away! It was Bauer's discovery, not his, even if Bauer did not yet realise the real value and meaning of his diagram. He was on the road to the discovery.

Walter stared at the paper again and wished he had never seen it. For he was face to face with a real temptation, one of the hardest and most alluring his young manhood had ever confronted, and he was afraid, as he continued to stare at the diagram made by Felix Bauer.

CHAPTER IV

IT was ten o'clock at night when Walter finally went out of the shop and up to his room. He did not turn on the light at once, but went over by his table and sat down.

The temptation he still faced had assumed alluring shapes. In the first place, he was saying to himself, "Bauer's drawings differ only a trifle from my own and I had practically gone as far as he, only one or two points were suggested to me by his diagram of the electrodes resting at an angle on the porcelain plate. The cutting of the teeth in the soft metal was also suggested by him. But I had thought out other points that were essential."

Then, again, Walter kept going over the great advantage it would be to him if this discovery were made by him first. He knew that the commercial value of any real improvement in city lighting was very large. There was money for him in this discovery. And Walter was growing more and more restless over his stewardship and the burdens it involved. He hated the drudgery and the time it took, and of late he began to feel quite certain that the same attitude displayed in other schools was creeping into Burrton, an attitude of contempt for the working student, nothing very pronounced, but enough to make him feel disagreeable and annoyed, for he was a finicky youth, sensitive to a great degree and with the taste of an aristocrat at heart.

"I don't see that I do Bauer any harm if I go ahead and make a model. I'll do that anyhow," he said out loud at last, as he got up and turned on his light. And then he saw under the edge of his door a note which had been slipped in there.

He went over, picked it up, opened it, and found it was a note from

Bauer.

"My Dear Douglas:—Within an hour after leaving the shop to-night I had a telegram calling me home. I do not know how soon I shall be able to return to Burrton, if at all. Will you kindly see if I left any of my apparatus or papers on my table and return them to my locker? I enclose the key with this note. Thank you. "FELIX BAUER."

So Bauer was going to be away indefinitely. He might not come back at all. He had not given any reason for the call to come home, but Walter remembered one remark the German student had made one day which led him to believe that Bauer's home life was unhappy and the relations between his father and mother were unpleasant. Suppose he never came back. Suppose he never finished his investigation of the lamp? Suppose—there was a number of possibilities to suppose. Why, then the field would be open to him and he could go ahead with a clear conscience. But could he? In spite of all sophistry and special pleading with himself Walter knew he had caught the idea of the electrodes from Bauer's drawing, which suggested the secret. How did he know but that Bauer had discovered it as indicated in his own diagram and was making that preliminary to the finished lamp?

There was one honest and plain way out for Walter. He could write to Bauer and frankly tell him that he had seen his drawings and had received from them a hint for the discovery and ask him if he were willing to share with him, Walter, in the result if the lamp proved worth while financially. But here was Walter's weak point. He was proud of his technical knowledge. Already it was conceded by all the students in the electrical engineering department that Douglas of Milton was the star. The instructors had given him special notice. He had already made one or two very valuable and original contributions to the problems that faced the shop every day. But nothing he had so far done would begin to compare with this new arc light. The thought of sharing his discovery with any one else touched his pride in its most sensitive and personal spot.

He threshed it all over back and forth and when he finally went to bed he was still undecided as to his course. The fact is, he could not escape all the time the standard he had been trained in at home. If Paul and Esther had done nothing else for their children they had certainly done this; they had implanted in their minds a deep and strong feeling that one of the things to be most desired in

life is honesty; clean, frank, wholesome honesty, free from cant and hypocrisy and double dealing. And Walter knew in his heart that what he was going to do was not honest to Bauer, even after he had juggled with his conscience and proved to himself that Bauer had no real rights in the matter. He knew perfectly well that the German student did have rights of prior discovery. No amount of argument or defense of his own discoveries could remove that fact.

Nevertheless, next day in the shop after he had put Bauer's belongings, including the paper with the drawings, into Bauer's locker, Walter found himself working with nervous haste over his model. It went together with wonderful exactness and in spite of his feeling that he was acting the part of a miserable cheat, he was, at least, during a part of the time, in a glow of enthusiasm. For the most part he worked at night, when he was least liable to watching from the other fellows. There were several reasons why he could do this, among them an unusual interest in the school at that time in evening functions which drew most of the shop workers out.

Walter took parts of his model up to his room each night and studied them. At the end of two weeks he had completed the lamp and it remained only to give it an actual test. No word had been received from Bauer, and inquiry from different professors had failed to discover any news from him. It seemed to Walter almost certain that Bauer would not return, and each day of his absence gave Walter less uneasiness, if not an actual dulling of the keen edge of his conscience.

The day before he planned to test his lamp at the shop, Walter received another letter from his mother, one part of which annoyed him greatly. His mother wrote chiding him good-naturedly for not sending his usual weekly letter. In fact, since his discovery of Bauer's plan, Walter had failed to write home, for the first time since coming to Burrton. He could not account for this failure except on the ground that he was too busy.

But his mother wrote without any knowledge of all this, telling him bits of news that she thought he would most want to know.

"Your father has been asked by the Citizens' Committee, to let his name go on the primaries for senator from the Fifth district. I have my doubts about the wisdom of a newspaper editor going into politics, but your father, while he had some hesitation, has finally agreed to let his name go down. So now we can expect lively times in the Douglas family until after election next fall.

"Helen has two more beaus, one of them ten years older than herself. I am not making fun of this, as you know, for I have tried to teach you all that the love part of life is in some ways the most serious as well as the most happy of all your experiences. Helen has good sense when it comes to a final decision on anything. I am not afraid for her.

"Louis is better than he has been for a long time. His eyes are stronger and his headaches have almost ceased. He seems to enjoy his studies this term and is making progress. We all feel pleased of course. Louis has had an offer from his uncle to go into the store, but your father and I would much prefer to keep him in school if his health will allow. We are ambitious for all of you and want you to have an education and do in the world what you are best fitted to do.

"We want you to come home for Christmas. And from the different bits you have written about your German friend Bauer we have been wondering if he could not come with you. I understand from one of your letters that he is rather a lonesome fellow, without many friends. If he is not going to his own home at Christmas time, give him a good, strong invitation from father and me to come with you. You know we have never been separated at the holiday season, and it will be my treat to pay your expenses home this time unless you make a new arc light and get it patented and make a lot of money out of it. We are all interested in the light and speak of it almost every day. Your father was saying this morning that our street lights are a disgrace to Milton. There is a citizens' war going on at present over the situation and every number of the *News* contains letters from angry taxpayers calling the city government to account for the wretched nature of the street lighting. If you should happen to discover an economical and satisfactory city lamp, the people of Milton would be ready now to compel the council to purchase and install it. Of course this all sounds rather like a story,

but stranger things have happened in the history of inventions. And if you should happen to be the fortunate discoverer, we would be very proud and happy.

"Don't forget to make the invitation to Mr. Bauer as hearty as you can.

I am anxious to see you, as all of us are.

"YOUR LOVING MOTHER."

The things which annoyed Walter in this letter were, first of all, his mother's invitation to Bauer. Of course if he did not return to school, that would be the end of it. But if he should return, why, then, under the peculiar conditions that existed it would be more than embarrassing for Walter to bring Bauer home with him. And to add to his annoyance Walter began to feel hard toward the German student, as if Bauer had done him a wrong. It is, of course, true that one of the surest ways to acquire a hatred of anyone is first of all to do him an injustice. Having already wronged Bauer in stealing his ideas, Walter was fast entering on the second stage of his relations to him and beginning to feel hateful toward him.

The other annoyance caused by his mother's letter was due to the fact that in her ignorance of the situation she was all unconsciously strengthening his temptation to complete the light and get it before the public as his own as soon as possible. The street-lighting conditions in Milton were duplicated in hundreds of municipalities all over the country. There was no doubt in Walter's mind that the first really successful economical lamp offered the public would find a quick and remunerative sale. With a growing excitement he began to see the great probabilities before his invention. And all that his mother had written simply tended to push him on to complete his work before Bauer could return and make the necessary discovery for himself.

He was vexed and annoyed to a degree he had never before experienced. And he knew deep down in his heart that it was because he was acting a dishonourable part toward the absent classmate. He began to lose sleep over it, and grew nervous and exceedingly unhappy. On the one hand, his home training had made him sensitive to moral standards. He would not have dared to write to his mother about the affair to ask her advice as to what he ought to do, because he knew without writing what she would say. On the other hand, his ambition goaded him to ignore what it called a technicality, tried to befog the issue by whispering that Bauer could not succeed without putting into the lamp the things which Walter had discovered already himself, and constantly insinuated that even if he had not happened to see Bauer's diagram, Walter would probably have worked it out in a day or two anyhow.

He replied to his mother's letter briefly, saying he was unusually busy and adding that he did not think Bauer could come with him because he had been called home and would not in all likelihood return to Burrton. He said nothing in this letter about the lamp; he could not bring himself to mention it. And he knew when he posted the letter that the tone of it would make his mother ask questions because it was so different from the enthusiastic, jolly letters he had written before.

It was during this week that he fixed on a certain evening to make a practical test of his lamp. He had guarded his secret successfully. Not a soul, including both instructors and students, knew the special work he had been doing. Among the great number of special and changing experiments going on in the shop it had not been difficult to keep his discovery to himself.

He chose a night when a great social event was occurring in hopes that he might have the shop to himself. There were a few enthusiastic specialists who did considerable night work, but on this particular evening they went out early and by nine o'clock he found himself alone. The power which lighted the town of Burrton was the same as that in use at the school and was in operation day and night. The conditions seemed absolutely favorable to a test of his invention, and by ten o'clock Walter had made all connections and brought his electrodes into position.

The only question with him was whether the heat of the arc would melt the soft metal teeth at the right time and with even regularity. He was pale and nervous with the tension of the work, his

loss of sleep and his goading of conscience, and when the carbons started to glow with the familiar hiss, he started back as if someone had come in, and looked around the shop fearfully.

Then he laughed hysterically and turned again to his machine. His whole attention was now fastened upon it, and with the true inventor's ecstasy he forgot Bauer, forgot his mother, forgot that he was at the center of a great moral tragedy for his own soul, forgot there was a God, and a judgment day and any such things as conscience or remorse, or injustice.

His whole soul flung itself on that point of dazzling light and the soft metal teeth which he had coupled in a strip to the electrodes. He watched it, fascinated and fearful. He saw the tooth begin to glow to a red, then to a white, heat and then it melted softly away, letting the electrodes fall gently, keeping the points of their position in perfect place while the second tooth slipped down in turn to be transformed into a soft and yielding point.

The lamp worked! It was a practical success! It had stood the test! He did not know how long he had been in the shop or how long he had been watching the mechanism. He switched off the power, and adjusted a part of the scissors-coupling. Then he turned on the current again and with the same feeling of fascination watched the softening and dissolving of the metal tooth.

A noise of a door opening aroused him and he looked up. Someone had come in, and was walking directly toward his bench.

The glare of the lamp blinded him, and his eyes had to become adjusted to the dimness as he turned his back on the lamp. But when the person was ten feet away he recognised in a moment the face of Bauer, as he came walking slowly toward him.

CHAPTER V

WALTER'S mind worked with what he afterward described to himself as an unquestioning obedience to a first impulse, at the centre of which was an instantaneous fear of discovery. Before Bauer had taken another step nearer him he had turned, switched off the power from the lamp, and snatched up a hammer from his bench.

With one blow he smashed the electrodes and then, as if made frantic over the act, he struck at the mechanism until it was a heap of bent and twisted wires and metal. It lay on his bench in a tangled mass and he stooped over it and began to sweep it off into the refuse box. Bauer had not yet said a word. Only with the first blow of the hammer he had ejaculated "Ach!" As Walter was flinging bits of the lamp into the box the German student came up and stood near, looking at Walter in astonishment.

"What is the matter?"

Walter simply muttered some unintelligible thing. He was, to tell the truth, tremendously excited, disturbed, overwhelmed by Bauer's return at this particular time.

"I've—I've been experimenting and have failed," he finally managed to say, stammering out the words with great difficulty. He was terrified to think Bauer might read in his face the whole story.

But Felix Bauer was one of the most simple-hearted and unsuspicious souls that ever lived. If he had not been, some of the things that are going to be true of this story could never have happened. He looked at Walter and then at the broken mechanism and simply said: "I am sorry you have failed. But it is nothing by the side of dishonor."

And then for the first time Walter looked openly and squarely into Bauer's face and saw tragedy there. The incandescent light over the bench was not a strong one. But Bauer was close to him and Walter quickly saw that he was not thinking of what Walter had done, was not going to ask him any questions about it, because some other thing was gripping him, some other thing so strong and insistent and sorrowful that it took possession of him and dominated him. Walter's action had already passed out of his mind as simply an incident connected with some disappointing experiment, and he was looking at Walter with an appeal in his great, sad eyes which smote Walter like a blow in the dark.

He felt almost faint and instinctively he sat down. Bauer had gone over to his own desk and stood leaning against it.

"I ought not to come in here and annoy you at this time," he said in his slow, almost stammering manner, "but I—you see, somehow I felt so lonely, so afraid, when I got off the train to-night, that I could not help the desire to see you, and they told me you must be in the shop. Heine says in the Lorelei, you know, 'Ich weiss nicht was soll es bedeuten, das Ich so traurig bin?' But I do know why I am so sad. It is disgrace which has befallen me, such deep disgrace to my home, my father–"

He stopped and looked at Walter timidly as if not quite sure how his confidence might be received. Walter sat with his head bowed, and smitten into silence. He did not know what to say, but Bauer probably took his silence for quiet sympathy, being of that nature himself and mistaking Walter's attitude for earnest attention.

"My father—you will understand what it means—has deserted my mother, and she has run away, the home destroyed is to be, and the disgrace—Oh, it is greater, more than I can endure, I said as I was obliged to come back for my things. It is more than I can bear alone, and you are so strong, so principled."

Walter cowered in his chair, appalled at the thing that was happening to him. Here was a soul in desperate need who had come to fling itself on him for companionship and courage, and he with his own soul stained with deception for the love of fame and money! He would have cried out; he wanted to, but Bauer went on, now he had broken over his natural reserve. He eagerly awaited Walter's sympathy, and his spirit hungered for light in his darkness.

"Yes, you see, I don't know anyone here, and your action about the story telling in your room—I heard of that—I counted it a brave thing to do. And, oh, I am so hungry for a friend! I need one; do you think you could be friend to me, do you, Douglas? Friend to a disgraced family? It is asking a great deal, but I feel the dark, the dark—it is so heavy for me–"

Bauer, looking at Walter in his almost animal-like appeal, saw at last that there was something he did not understand in Walter's attitude. Walter's mind was not confused by the strange situation, it was clear and vibrating with feeling. But it was a long time before he could speak. How could he tell Bauer the truth now? Why not let him remain in ignorance of the purpose to steal his ideas? Nothing had been done so far to really wrong him. The lamp was destroyed. Walter would not make another, and the basis of a possible friendship, such as Bauer needed, could be established without any explanation or foolish confession.

But somehow Walter could not rest with that suggestion. He felt that if Bauer had his friendship it must rest on truth and a frank outspoken revelation of the character of the soul he was appealing to for help.

It was very still in the big shop when Walter finally looked up and said to Bauer:

"I am not worthy of your friendship. I am not what you think I am."

"Not worthy? Not–" Bauer looked at him in amazement.

"No, not worthy. Look!" Walter spoke fast now as if afraid he might fail in courage. "Open your locker! Here! here is the key! You left it with me."

He thrust the key at Bauer, and Bauer turned around, and under the pressure of Walter's look and voice opened his locker and stood in front of it holding on to the door.

"There! That paper! Your plan, your drawing of the lamp! Open it. Let me show–"

Bauer obeyed mechanically. Walter got up and stood by Bauer's table. Bauer slowly unfolded the paper. His look showed he had almost forgotten it.

"There! See! You were on the right track! The soft metal teeth coupled to the electrode! Don't you see?" Bauer's face began to glow for the first time that evening, for he, too, like Walter, had the inventor's sensitive hunger. "You left the paper here the night you were called home. I saw it and copied it before I put it back. I made the model and it works. That is it there," and Walter pointed to the stuff on the table and in the refuse box. "Do you understand? I stole your plans. I was going to get out the lamp without telling you if you had not come back. And I am the person you want for a friend. Am I worthy? Do you understand now?"

A dull red spot began to creep up into the German student's face. He was still holding the locker door with one hand. His eye travelled from the diagram to Walter and then back again. Walter stood very erect, his head thrown back almost defiantly now that he had made his confession, and he was absolutely in the dark as to the effect of it on Bauer. He would and could not blame him for being angry. And he was angry for a moment. But only a moment. Then his great brown eyes softened and he said in a quiet, gentle way that moved Walter more than any burst of passion could have done:

"I am not a judge for you. While on the way home I suddenly thought out the secret of the metal teeth. See! I have it here." He took out of his pocket a paper and opening it spread it out on Walter's desk. Walter saw in a second's glance that Bauer had discovered the working basis for the successful light. "And I was going to work on the plan when I came back. But all my trouble drove it away. I lost my ambition. And I understand what you did. I might have done the same. But still, Douglas, do you know, I don't care. I—I am hungry for a friend just like you. What you have said does not change anything. What difference does that make? That is not trouble, not for me."

Walter looked at him a moment and then in the reaction which was really the taking off of the strain of weeks, he put his head between his hands and sobbed. Bauer did not venture to say anything. When Walter could control himself he reached out his hand. Bauer took it, and in that grasp the two young men understood each other for life. I think each gave as much as he took. The sacred compact they sealed in the big empty shop that night was made with few words, but it was never disturbed nor

broken in after years. And each one of them realised something of the depth and joy of real friendship. Do you? Does anybody? Our human friendships, when they are real and permanent, are the finest and richest possessions of our lives. Pity we treat them so lightly and measure them so tamely.

That same night Bauer in his simple manner told Walter something more of his home troubles, enough to give Walter a glimpse into the real sorrow of his heart. Walter in his turn told in part the story of his temptation and of his struggles and tortures to escape. To this Bauer listened with a faint smile and with perfect understanding.

In the days that followed, they agreed to construct the lamp between them and share in the profits from it. And when they began work on the mechanism each found that the other had discovered little improvements which were necessary to the best construction, finally producing a lamp far more perfect and practical than Walter's first attempt.

The day after that memorable scene with Bauer in the shop Walter wrote home a long and exuberant letter, a part of which we may read.

"Mother, I can't begin to tell you what a relief I have experienced since I told Bauer all about it. I believe I had a little taste of hell for a while and I don't want to go through it again. Bauer and I are the best friends you ever saw. He is just the opposite of me. I'm impulsive and quick and get mad quick and all that. You know all about it, but he is slow and calm and talks only a little at a time. He is not what you would call handsome, but he has the most beautiful brown eyes I ever saw. If I was a girl I would think he was handsome because his eyes are. He has told me a good deal about his home life and I have told him something about ours, and he has asked some questions. And, oh yes, he is coming home with me for the holidays. At first he refused, but when I told him how much you wanted him to come and how lonesome it would be for him here he consented to come. I hope you will all like him. Helen will probably think he is odd and solemn, but I hope she will be kind and all of us can make him feel at home.

"We are working on the lamp together and it is almost finished. We are keeping the construction of it a secret because we want to spring it on Anderson, the foreman. I haven't told you about him. He is all up on electricity, knows as much about it as Edison, at least he almost says so at times, and he really does know a lot, but he is the one teacher in the whole bunch I don't like. There is a manner about him that makes you feel he has on a dress suit and a stovepipe hat all the time. I heard the other day he is related to the Van Shaws, a cousin or something of the steel magnate at Pittsburgh. I have never had any trouble with Anderson, but I felt relieved the other day to hear that I was not the only fellow in the school that he ruffled. He is mighty unpopular. Bauer and I are going to make sure of our lamp first and then give Anderson a look at it. If the thing goes as well as we expect I don't know how much there will be in it for us. But if it is anything like what I expect, no more stewardship for me. I'm tired of waiting on the swells, and since the Van Shaw episode I've not had a very pleasant time with some of them. You see, mother, there is a crowd here that seems to think it is necessary to be coarse and fast in order to be men. The more money they can spend, the more beer they can drink, the more chorus girls' photographs they can get to paste up in their rooms, the more tobacco pipes they can display over and under their mantels, the more slang and indecency they can learn, the more college atmosphere they think they are creating. I wonder sometimes why the professors don't seem to care about the morals of us students. We never hear anything in the class room or the shop except the technical parts of our studies. I haven't a single teacher at Burrton that I would go to if I were in real trouble and I never would think of going to President Davis about anything. He is a great scholar and hustler for money, but I should hate to have to go to him for advice or sympathy.

"Well, I have made the letter long enough. I'm getting a little homesick to see you all, and looking forward to the holidays. Expect me home with a trunk full of money from the sale of the lamp. If we get it patented we may either sell the thing outright, or Bauer thinks we can better make profitable terms with some good electrical manufacturing firm like Madison Brooks & Co., New York. Love to all. "Walter."

Mrs. Douglas answered him at once and in the course of her letter expressed her delight at the happy outcome of Walter's experience with the lamp and with Bauer's friendship.

"I don't know when you have given your mother more happiness, boy. I was so happy I cried all the forenoon while your father and Helen and Louis were out of the house. I am delighted that you have made a friend. Do you know what that means? If Bauer is what you think he is, you and he have something more than a trunkful of money. A man or a woman can live to be fifty years old without gaining more than two or three such friends as Bauer. So what has really happened to you is a splendid thing. And I hope you will feel very rich indeed. Of course we would all be pleased if the lamp turns out to be a success. But I suppose you will make up your mind to be ready for anything. There are many slips between models and patents, and it will be well for both of you not to buy expensive trips around the world on the strength of your discovery until the money is really in hand.

"Louis is giving us some trouble lately. He is very slow in his studies, especially his English, Your father, I think, feels annoyed by it, because he wants Louis to be literary. But Louis's English teacher brought to your father the other day a composition Louis had written on the Tuberculosis Outdoor Hospital recently established at the Mansfield farm by the State Board of Health. Miss Barrows, the teacher, is a very practical person and she went out to this tuberculosis station with a section of her class in English, and told the members to keep their eyes open and on their return to the school to write one hundred words about what they had seen. And this is Louis's contribution to the symposium:

"'Tuberculosis was started in 1884, by Dr. Trudeau, who had it in the Adirondacks. Although consumption is not inherited and does not belong in the climate it is getting very popular. The sleeping bags are very useful to the consumptive people because they can keep their heads out and put the rest of their bodies into them. I saw the germs. It is a big white ball with blue spots on it. I think it would be fine to sleep in one of those beds with the head inside and the lungs outside.'

"Well, when your father read this, he simply choked. In fact we all choked, and Helen who happened to get hold of it somehow, just screamed. Poor Louis was mad at every one of us and especially at Miss Barrows when he heard she had taken his account to his father. At first your father thought Louis was trying to be funny at the expense of the English department in the high school. But he wasn't. He was in dead earnest, and doing his best. I tell your father that it isn't fair to ridicule Louis. Ridicule is a dangerous form of criticism and Louis is very sensitive. I don't blame him for saying that the teacher ought not to make fun of him when he is trying to get his lessons. He fairly hates some of his teachers because they use sarcastic or ironical remarks about him in the presence of the whole school. It seems strange to me that any teacher will do that, especially in the case of a boy like Louis. They defend themselves by saying it is the only way to wake up the students or shame them into doing good work. But I believe they are wrong in their methods with boys like Louis and I am going to talk with them about it for his sake.

"We will welcome Bauer with you at the holidays. He will feel at home with us if your mother has anything to do about it. We all anticipate his coming. If you are a little homesick to see us we are all more than a little eager to see you. I pray the good God to keep you pure and true. Lovingly, "MOTHER."

Two weeks after this and two weeks before the Christmas holidays, Walter and Bauer had completed their lamp and given it a test. It was more perfect by far than Walter's model. It worked with a practical certainty that left no doubt in their minds that unless some unforeseen factor came in to change conditions they had a workable, economic mechanism which was automatic and durable.

Within a day or two they decided to let Anderson into the secret and Walter asked him to come into the shop at night to see the result of some special original work. This was a common request and the foreman simply made his engagement at the hour assigned, and when the hour came he went in and Watched Walter and Bauer bring out the lamp and make the necessary connections. Anderson had respect for Walter's ability, recognising in him the brightest mind for electricity that Burrton had

ever seen in a student. He stood by silently at first while Walter in considerable excitement and some evident pride did the explaining. But when the light started in the arc and the brilliant glow of it began to fling out its dazzling shafts through the shop the professor started forward, a look of astonishment came over his face and he asked Walter a question, so unexpected, that Walter turned pale and looked first at Anderson and then at Bauer in blind wonder and a great sinking of heart.

CHAPTER VI

"DIDN'T you know that this lamp has already been made and patent applied for by Gambrich of New York?"

"No! When?"

"Within the last week. Wait. I'll show you."

Anderson went over to his own desk at the end of the shop. In the few minutes he was gone, Walter and Bauer exchanged questions.

"Do you suppose that's true?"

"Doesn't seem possible, does it? If it is, our cake is dough."

"Anderson seemed pleased when he announced the fact, if it is one," said

Walter bitterly.

"It may not be true, you know," said Bauer hopefully.

Anderson had come back in time to hear the last sentence.

"It is true, though, young man. See."

He had the last copy of the *Electrical News*, and it was open at an illustrated page.

He laid it down on Walter's bench and he and Bauer eagerly bent over it.

Almost the first glance revealed the fact that the lamp described in the paper was identical with their own and application for a patent had been made within ten days. The account of the discovery, moreover, made the date earlier than the discovery made by Walter.

"You see, don't you," said Anderson. "Gambrich has exactly the same device of metal teeth coupled to one electrode. It's an ingenious device and you fellows have certainly great credit for thinking it out almost simultaneously with Gambrich."

"According to this account, our lamp was made before Gambrich's. Does that give him priority of invention?" asked Walter eagerly.

Anderson shrugged his shoulders.

"Priority of manufacture does not legally cut any figure by the side of priority of invention. You might be able to prove that you had made the lamp before Gambrich made his, but that would not help you any if he invented his arrangement first, long before you made your lamp."

"Is that really strict justice?" said Bauer slowly.

"It is law," said Anderson grimly, "and you must remember that law and justice are not in every case synonymous. I'm sorry for you fellows. There's a lot of money in that invention for the manufacturers of the lamp, and considerable for the inventor if he knows how to make terms."

"Do you mean," asked Walter gloomily, "that really we have no right at all with what we have made?"

"Don't you see you haven't? What can you do? Ask any lawyer, if you don't believe me."

Anderson spoke somewhat testily as he started to go away.

"I believe you're glad we missed this opportunity," said Walter angrily. He was tremendously discouraged over the event and could not control his feelings.

Anderson grew very red and turned on Walter in a rage.

"I don't mind saying I am glad your pride has had a tumble. You have been unbearable for some time. Maybe this will teach you a lesson. There are people in the world who know a little about electricity as well as yourself."

All of which was not calculated to sweeten Walter's sense of defeat or make him more friendly to Anderson, who, after glaring at Bauer, who had not said a word, abruptly went out of the shop.

The lamp was working all this time, with an exasperating smoothness and precision that spoke eloquently of its financial possibilities. There were a few workers in the other parts of the shop who,

realising that some unusual event was on, began to gather around Walter and Bauer and ask questions. Among the group was Van Shaw.

In a few moments everyone knew the story of the lamp, and Walter and Bauer came in for congratulations over the invention and sympathy for its uselessness to them.

"I could have told everybody about that lamp two months ago," said Van Shaw, speaking with an indirect manner peculiarly offensive to Walter. "I have had advices from a near friend in New York that Gambrich was at work on this device. It's a pity some Burrton man can't have the credit and the cash that are going to Gambrich."

Walter's fingers closed around one of the tools on his bench and he felt mad enough at that moment to throw it either at Van Shaw or the lamp. He did not do either, but when the crowd had finally gone away, he sat down at his bench and said to Bauer: "What chumps we were not to apply for a patent weeks ago. We might have contested it. We have let a fortune slip out of our hands through our stupidity."

"It's because we did not take anyone into confidence. I never thought of a patent. I was too much absorbed in the lamp itself to think anything about anything else."

"Whom could we have taken into confidence? Van Shaw or Anderson? But I don't feel like giving up. Why can't we contest our rights? There are cases in the courts every day over patents and inventions."

"But it takes a lot of money to hire a lawyer and go to law," said Bauer with real Teutonic caution. "And I haven't a dollar to spare. According to Anderson, it's as good as settled that Gambrich has the legal right to the lamps."

Walter stared at the arc gloomily. He felt the disappointment with deep bitterness. Not only was his pride smitten at the thought of others who were working out his ideas, but the thought of the money he might have made, and the relief that money might have brought him, rankled deepest in his mind.

Bauer took the affair more philosophically. He went over to Walter and put a hand on his shoulder.

"When we are beaten we might as well accept it and make something else.

I don't like to see you take the thing so hard."

"What else can we make?" Walter said after a moment. "I've lost my ambition."

"Oh, no you haven't; not for good and all. Why, we might invent a typewriter telegraph."

"It's too late, that's already been done."

"I'll tell you what would bring us fame and money," said Bauer with his usual slow manner and his friendly smile. "What the world needs is a letter writer that will take letters at dictation, first hand."

Walter stared at Bauer gloomily. "What's that?"

"A direct letter writer," said Bauer. "A machine that the business man and the minister and the college professor and the politician and the railroad man and the lover could talk into. As fast as he talked, it would make a visible mark on the paper and when the person was through dictating his letter he could pull it out all typewritten ready to send. Just think what a blessing this would be to the busy letter writer."

Walter stared at Bauer as if his friend was crazy. Then, after a moment of doubt, he burst into a great laugh.

"Well, of all the—It's the first time I ever knew a German could be out and out funny. Do you know what your letter writing machine would have to do? It would have to know how to spell right."

"No, it wouldn't. All it would have to do would be to spell phonetically. Every machine would spell and print just as the person talked."

"Yes, and what will become of the great army of stenographers and typewriter girls who make their living now at taking dictation? I don't want to invent something that is going to deprive thousands of people of a living."

"You could marry one of them and I would marry another. That would take care of two of 'em," said Bauer solemnly.

Walter looked up at him a moment, and then he roared. It was what Bauer wanted him to do. And when they finally went to their rooms Walter was feeling somewhat better, although he did not get a good night's sleep. His dreams had in them fitful glimpses of Van Shaw and Anderson and a red hot arc lamp that glared and flamed at him with a diabolical grin that rejoiced in his defeat.

It was two days before he could bring himself to write home a full account of the matter. Both his father and his mother replied to this and each wrote in full sympathy with him and a knowledge of what his disappointment would be to him.

"Of course," Paul said, at the close of his letter, "if it is true that the New York man really invented the idea of the lamp before you did and then patented it before you did, that settles it, even if you were first to make an actual model. The patent laws recognise priority of invention where no unreasonable delay has followed the invention and the application for patent. Looking up the subject in the *Electrical News* and consulting with Alvord, our best patent lawyer here in Milton, I am afraid you are too late to do anything, and a contest, Alvord thinks, would result in nothing but expense for you and your friend. If I thought there was any legal right you possessed and ought to have I would be willing to help you contest for it. But that seems to be out of the question.

"Don't let this defeat mean too much to you. It is not a defeat. You did your best and actually made a very important discovery, you and Bauer. If you can do that, you can do other things as well. The unknown, undiscovered world of electricity is boundless. You have as much right to enter in as anybody, and far more probabilities than most persons that you will find something worth while. We are all anticipating your home coming for holidays and expect Bauer to come with you. Affectionately your father.

"PAUL DOUGLAS."

Walter's mother wrote in much the same way and cheerfully urged him to take all the disappointing things with hopeful equanimity.

"The longer I live, the more I find the real joy of life consists in doing our best with God's help and leaving the results with Him. Of course we all like to get results out of our efforts. But we forget that results always do follow honest effort, only they are not always the results we expected and wanted. No doubt, boy, you feel like saying to us at home, 'Yes, it's easy for you to sit there at your ease and deal out calm chunks of sympathy to me and tell me not to worry or feel bad, but if you had worked as hard as I did you wouldn't find it quite as easy to be happy over this disappointment.'

"Well, we confess all that, but your mother doesn't want to see her son give up and go down to defeat from one or two or a dozen or even a hundred blows. You have had the joy of making the lamp (after you cleared your soul by confession to Bauer), and you know that your brain works at its best along inventive lines and you know the field of invention, especially in electricity, is limitless. Your mother says to you, we feel proud of you and we will feel doubly proud if you will learn to take this disappointment cheerfully. Don't be a baby over it. Be a man. The tests of manhood are not found in the easy, but in the difficult things of life.

"The great thing after all, is to live up to the high calling. I don't care much, Walter, whether you ever invent anything or not, although I wish you could find out how to make a machine that will take off a woman's hat and hold it in church so that she can take care of her hymn book, her Bible, her gloves, her pocket book, her fan, her umbrella and her handkerchief, but if you never discovered a single secret of nature and discover the secret of a useful life, I would be and shall be the happiest of all women, for that is my ambition for you and always will be.

"Be sure and bring Bauer home with you. We are all interested to see him.

"Lovingly,
"MOTHER."

Helen also wrote to Walter at this time. She was not much of a letter writer but she wanted to add her word of sympathy with the rest and Walter felt especially pleased that she exerted herself on this occasion.

"Dear Bub," Helen wrote, using the name she had always given him in her childhood. "We all feel awfully sorry about the way the lamp came out. It didn't seem fair to you and I hope you will invent something better that will throw that lamp in the shade, so to speak. We all believe in you and I have never for a moment doubted that in time you would be another Edison. I'm enjoying my school this year more than ever. Since our new gymnasium director was appointed I have found favor in her eyes and she has turned over one of the academy classes to me by consent of President Bruce. I did plan to study for a position as professor of domestic science, but since this appointment work opened up I feel as if I could like to be a physical director in a college or a Y. W. C. A. I love the gymnasium work immensely and Miss Rhodes says I am her best pupil.

"We are all wondering what sort of an individual your Felix Bauer is. Does he speak broken English very badly? Will it be difficult to talk to him without a German grammar? I have an idea I shall not like him very well, from what you have written about him. But I don't suppose that will make any difference to him.

"Father has got into politics all right and as he and mother have written you, he has been elected senator and will begin his term in January when the legislature meets. Father is very hopeful about doing things. Mother says he will have lots of opposition from the machine. I don't understand all this political discussion, but you know father. He is dead in earnest as you know and now that he is elected he is going to make the machine, whatever that is, 'sit up and take notice.' This is what my teacher in English would call a disjointed metaphor.

"Father is working over a dozen bills calculated to reform the state. The word 'reform' is a household word in the Douglas family. But you know father. Isn't he the dearest man that ever lived? It makes me mad to read what the papers have been saying about him ever since he was nominated. Anyone who didn't know father would think from reading these papers that he was an out and out villain. And we all know, and Milton people know, that if ever a man lived who had a pure and earnest desire to help make a better world, father is that man. I hate politics. It seems to me it is the meanest thing there is. I don't know anything else so mean as to take a man like father and question his motives and call him all sorts of names and try to blacken his character. Mother says she doesn't mind, but I believe she can't help feeling it some. It just makes me mad.

"Well, bub, don't be discouraged. We believe in you just as much as ever. We are looking for you home next week.

"Oh, by the way, does your friend Bauer have to have his beer regularly? And must we lay in an extra supply of sauer kraut and pretzels? I am sitting up nights studying my German exercises so I can say 'Eine Schwalbe macht noch Keinen Sommer' and other interesting topics of conversation. Lovingly your sister.

"HELEN DILLINGHAM DOUGLAS."

Walter laughed over this letter, but rather resented the tone Helen displayed about Bauer. "I hope Bauer won't make any bad breaks and I don't believe he will." But Walter had a little talk with Bauer that same evening in which Bauer expressed a little nervousness about his approaching visit at Walter's home.

"I haven't ever been anywhere to speak of, you know," he said a little doubtfully. "And I begin to feel a little afraid of meeting your folks."

"Afraid? Why, you can't even look at mother without falling in love with her. And as for father he will take to you right off. I know he will, for several reasons."

"But your sister?" Bauer looked up at the photograph of Helen on Walter's dresser. "Somehow I feel a little afraid of her. I don't believe I'll get along very well. Does she talk German? I feel a little more at my ease if I can talk what you call small talk in my own language."

"No, I don't believe Helen knows enough German to talk it intelligently. But you needn't be afraid of her. She is interested in your coming as all the family are and she has asked me several questions about you," said Walter, not venturing to tell Bauer what the questions were.

"Is that so?" said Bauer, looking pleased. Then after a moment he added,

"It's awfully good of you to ask me to your home. I won't forget it."

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