

### CHAPTER III

His work upon the page began the following week. When the first morning of his campaign opened with a tumultuous blizzard, Jim Bowles and Julius Steinberger privately sympathized with him as they dressed in company, but they heard him whistling in his own hall bedroom as he put on his clothes, and to none of the three did it occur that time could be lost because the weather was inhuman. Blinding snow was being whirled through the air by a wind which had bellowed across the bay, and torn its way howling through the streets, maltreating people as it went, snatching their breath out of them, and leaving them gaspingly clutching at hats and bending their bodies before it. Street-cars went by loaded from front to back platform, and were forced from want of room to whizz heartlessly by groups waiting anxiously at street corners.

Tembarom saw two or three of them pass in this way, leaving the waiting ones desperately huddled together behind them. He braced himself and whistled louder as he buttoned his celluloid collar.

"I'm going to get up to Harlem all the same," he said. "The 'L' will be just as jammed, but there'll be a place somewhere, and I'll get it."

His clothes were the outwardly decent ones of a young man who must

perforce seek cheap clothing-stores, and to whom a ten-dollar "hand-me-down" is a source of exultant rejoicing. With the aid of great care and a straight, well-formed young body, he managed to make the best of them; but they were not to be counted upon for warmth even in ordinarily cold weather. His overcoat was a specious covering, and was not infrequently odorous of naphtha.

"You've got to know something about first aid to the wounded if you live on ten per," he had said once to Little Ann. "A suit of clothes gets to be an emergency-case mighty often if it lasts three years."

"Going up to Harlem to-day, T. T.?" his neighbor at table asked him as he sat down to breakfast.

"Right there," he answered. "I've ordered the limousine round, with the foot-warmer and fur rugs."

"I guess a day wouldn't really matter much," said Mrs. Bowse, good-naturedly. "Perhaps it might be better to-morrow."

"And perhaps it mightn't," said Tembarom, eating "break-fast-food" with a cheerful appetite. "What you can't be stone-cold sure of to-morrow you drive a nail in to-day."

He ate a tremendous breakfast as a discreet precautionary measure. The dark dining-room was warm, and the food was substantial. It was

comfortable in its way.

"You'd better hold the hall door pretty tight when you go out, and don't open it far," said Mrs. Bowse as he got up to go. "There's wind enough to upset things."

Tembarom went out in the hall, and put on his insufficient overcoat. He buttoned it across his chest, and turned its collar up to his ears. Then he bent down to turn up the bottoms of his trousers.

"A pair of arctics would be all to the merry right here," he said, and then he stood upright and saw Little Ann coming down the staircase holding in her hand a particularly ugly tar-tan-plaid woolen neck-scarf of the kind known in England as a "comforter."

"If you are going out in this kind of weather," she said in her serene, decided little voice, "you'd better wrap this comforter right round your neck, Mr. Tembarom. It's one of Father's, and he can spare it because he's got another, and, besides, he's not going out."

Tembarom took it with a sudden emotional perception of the fact that he was being taken care of in an abnormally luxurious manner.

"Now, I appreciate that," he said. "The thing about you, Little Ann, is that you never make a wrong guess about what a fellow needs, do you?"

"I'm too used to taking care of Father not to see things," she answered.

"What you get on to is how to take care of the whole world --initials on a fellow's socks and mufflers round his neck." His eyes looked remarkably bright.

"If a person were taking care of the whole world, he'd have a lot to do," was her sedate reception of the remark. "You'd better put that twice round your neck, Mr. Tembarom."

She put up her hand to draw the end of the scarf over his shoulder, and Tembarom stood still at once, as though he were a little boy being dressed for school. He looked down at her round cheek, and watched one of the unexpected dimples reveal itself in a place where dimples are not usually anticipated. It was coming out because she was smiling a small, observing smile. It was an almost exciting thing to look at, and he stood very still indeed. A fellow who did not own two pairs of boots would be a fool not to keep quiet.

"You haven't told me I oughtn't to go out till the blizzard lets up," he said presently.

"No, I haven't, Mr. Tembarom," she answered. "You're one of the kind that mean to do a thing when they've made up their minds. It'll be a

nice bit of money if you can keep the page."

"Galton said he'd give me a chance to try to make good," said Tembarom. "And if it's the hit he thinks it ought to be, he'll raise me ten. Thirty per. Vanastorbilts won't be in it. I think I'll get married," he added, showing all his attractive teeth at once.

"I wouldn't do that," she said. "It wouldn't be enough to depend on. New York's an expensive place."

She drew back and looked him over. "That'll keep you much warmer," she decided. "Now you can go. I've been looking in the telephone-book for confectioners, and I've written down these addresses." She handed him a slip of paper.

Tembarom caught his breath.

"Hully gee!" he exclaimed, "there never were TWO of you made! One used up all there was of it. How am I going to thank you, anyhow!"

"I do hope you'll be able to keep the page," she said. "I do that, Mr. Tembarom."

If there had been a touch of coquetry in her earnest, sober, round, little face she would have been less distractingly alluring, but there was no shade of anything but a sort of softly motherly anxiety

in the dropped note of her voice, and it was almost more than flesh and blood at twenty-five could stand. Tembarom made a hasty, involuntary move toward her, but it was only a slight one, and it was scarcely perceptible before he had himself in hand and hurriedly twisted his muffler tighter, showing his teeth again cheerily.

"You keep on hoping it all day without a let-up," he said. "And tell Mr. Hutchinson I'm obliged to him, please. Get out of the way, Little Ann, while I go out. The wind might blow you and the hat-stand upstairs."

He opened the door and dashed down the high steps into the full blast of the blizzard. He waited at the street corner while three overcrowded cars whizzed past him, ignoring his signals because there was not an inch of space left in them for another passenger. Then he fought his way across two or three blocks to the nearest "L" station. He managed to wedge himself into a train there, and then at least he was on his way. He was thinking hard and fast, but through all his planning the warm hug of the tartan comforter round his neck kept Little Ann near him. He had been very thankful for the additional warmth as the whirling snow and wind had wrought their will with him while he waited for the cars at the street corner. On the "L" train he saw her serious eyes and heard the motherly drop in her voice as she said, "I do hope you'll be able to keep the page. I do that, Mr. Tembarom." It made him shut his hands hard as they hung in his overcoat pockets for warmth, and it made him shut his sound teeth

strongly.

"Gee! I've got to!" his thoughts said for him. "If I make it, perhaps my luck will have started. When a man's luck gets started, every darned thing's to the good."

The "L" had dropped most of its crowd when it reached the up-town station among the hundredth streets which was his destination. He tightened his comforter, tucked the ends firmly into the front of his overcoat, and started out along the platform past the office, and down the steep, iron steps, already perilous with freezing snow. He had to stop to get his breath when he reached the street, but he did not stop long. He charged forth again along the pavement, looking closely at the shop-windows. There were naturally but few passers-by, and the shops were not important-looking; but they were open, and he could see that the insides of them looked comfortable in contrast with the blizzard-ruled street. He could not see both sides of the street as he walked up one side of the block without coming upon a confectioner's. He crossed at the corner and turned back on the other side. Presently he saw that a light van was standing before one place, backed up against the sidewalk to receive parcels, its shuddering horse holding its head down and bracing itself with its forelegs against the wind. At any rate, something was going on there, and he hurried forward to find out what it was. The air was so thick with myriads of madly flying bits of snow, which seemed whirled in all directions in the air, that he could not see anything definite even a

few yards away. When he reached the van he found that he had also reached his confectioner. The sign over the window read "M. Munsberg, Confectionery. Cakes. Ice-Cream. Weddings, Balls and Receptions."

"Made a start, anyhow," said Tembarom.

He turned into the store, opening the door carefully, and thereby barely escaping being blown violently against a stout, excited, middle-aged little Jew who was bending over a box he was packing. This was evidently Mr. Munsberg, who was extremely busy, and even the modified shock upset his temper.

"Where you goin'?" he cried out. "Can't you look where you're goin'?"

Tembarom knew this was not a good beginning, but his natural mental habit of vividly seeing the other man's point of view helped him after its usual custom. His nice grin showed itself.

"I wasn't going; I was coming," he said. "Beg pardon. The wind's blowing a hundred miles an hour."

A good-looking young woman, who was probably Mrs. Munsberg, was packing a smaller box behind the counter. Tembarom lifted his hat, and she liked it.

"He didn't do it a bit fresh," she said later. "Kind o' nice." She



spoke to him with professional politeness.

"Is there anything you want?" she asked.

Tembarom glanced at the boxes and packages standing about and at Munsberg, who had bent over his packing again. Here was an occasion for practical tact.

"I've blown in at the wrong time," he said. "You're busy getting things out on time. I'll just wait.. Gee! I'm glad to be inside. I want to speak to Mr. Munsberg."

Mr. Munsberg jerked himself upright irascibly, and broke forth in the accent of the New York German Jew.

"If you comin' in here to try to sell somedings, young man, joost you let that same vind vat blew you in blow you right out pretty quick. I'm not buyin' nodings. I'm busy."

"I'm not selling a darned thing," answered Tembarom, with undismayed cheer.

"You vant someding?" jerked out Munsberg.

"Yes, I want something," Tembarom answered, " but it's nothing any one has to pay for. I'm only a newspaper man." He felt a glow of

pride as he said the words. He was a newspaper man even now. "Don't let me stop you a minute. I'm in luck to get inside anywhere and sit down. Let me wait."

Mrs. Munsberg read the Sunday papers and revered them. She also knew the value of advertisement. She caught her husband's eye and hurriedly winked at him.

"It's awful outside. 'T won't do harm if he waits--if he ain't no agent," she put in.

"See," said Tembarom, handing over one of the cards which had been Little Ann's businesslike inspiration.

"T. Tembarom. New York Sunday Earth," read Munsberg, rather grudgingly. He looked at T. Tembarom, and T. Tembarom looked back at him. The normal human friendliness in the sharp boyish face did it.

"Vell," he said, making another jerk toward a chair, "if you ain't no agent, you can wait."

"Thank you," said Tembarom, and sat down. He had made another start, anyhow.

After this the packing went on fast and furious. A youth appeared from the back of the store, and ran here and there as he was ordered.

Munsberg and his wife filled wooden and cardboard boxes with small cakes and larger ones, with sandwiches and salads, candies and crystallized fruits. Into the larger box was placed a huge cake with an icing temple on the top of it, with silver doves adorning it outside and in. There was no mistaking the poetic significance of that cake. Outside the blizzard whirled clouds of snow-particles through the air, and the van horse kept his head down and his forelegs braced. His driver had long since tried to cover him with a blanket which the wind continually tore loose from its fastenings, and flapped about the creature's sides. Inside the store grew hot. There was hurried moving about, banging of doors, excited voices, irascible orders given and countermanded. Tembarom found out in five minutes that the refreshments were for a wedding reception to be held at a place known as "The Hall," and the goods must be sent out in time to be ready for the preparations for the wedding supper that night.

"If I knew how to handle it, I could get stuff for a column just sitting here," he thought. He kept both eyes and ears open. He was sharp enough to realize that the mere sense of familiarity with detail which he was gaining was material in itself. Once or twice he got up and lent a hand with a box in his casual way, and once or twice he saw that he could lift some-thing down or up for Mrs. Munsberg, who was a little woman. The natural casualness of his way of jumping up to do the things prevented any suspicion of officiousness, and also prevented his waiting figure from beginning

to wear the air of a superfluous object in the way. He waited a long time, and circumstances so favored him as to give him a chance or so. More than once exactly the right moment presented itself when he could interject an apposite remark. Twice he made Munsberg laugh, and twice Mrs. Munsberg voluntarily addressed him.

At last the boxes and parcels were all carried out and stored in the van, after strugglings with the opening and shutting of doors, and battlings with outside weather.

When this was all over, Munsberg came back into the store, knocking his hands together and out of breath.

"Dot's all right," he said. "It'll all be there plenty time.

Wouldn't have fell down on that order for twenty-five dollars. Dot temple on the cake was splendid. Joseph he done it fine."

"He never done nothin' no finer," Mrs. Munsberg said. "It looked as good as anything on Fift' Avenoo."

Both were relieved and pleased with themselves, their store, and their cake-decorator. Munsberg spoke to Tembarom in the manner of a man who, having done a good thing, does not mind talking about it.

"Dot was a big order," he remarked.

"I should smile," answered Tembarom. "I'd like to know whose going to get outside all that good stuff. That wedding-cake took the tart away from anything I've ever seen. Which of the four hundred's going to eat it?"

"De man vot ordered dot cake," Munsberg swaggered, "he's not got to worry along on vun million nor two. He owns de biggest brewery in New York, I guess in America. He's Schwartz of Schwartz & Kapfer."

"Well, he 's got it to burn!" said Tembarom.

"He's a mighty good man," went on Munsberg. " He's mighty fond of his own people. He made his first money in Harlem, and he had a big fight to get it; but his own people vas good to him, an' he's never forgot it. He's built a fine house here, an' his girls is fine girls. De vun's goin' to be married to-night her name's Rachel, an' she's goin' to marry a nice feller, Louis Levy. Levy built the big entertainment-hall vhere the reception's goin' to be. It's decorated vith two thousand dollars' worth of bride roses an' lilies of de valley an' smilax. All de up-town places vas bought out, an' den Schwartz vent down Fift' Avenoo."

The right moment had plainly arrived.

"Say, Mr. Munsberg," Tembarom broke forth, "you're giving me just what I wanted to ask you for. I'm the new up-town society reporter

for the Sunday Earth, and I came in here to see if you wouldn't help me to get a show at finding out who was going to have weddings and society doings. I didn't know just how to start."

Munsberg gave a sort of grunt. He looked less amiable.

"I s'pose you're used to nothin' but Fift' Avenoo," he said.

Tembarom grinned exactly at the right time again. Not only his good teeth grinned, but his eyes grinned also, if the figure may be used.

"Fifth Avenue!" he laughed. "There's been no Fifth Avenue in mine. I'm not used to anything, but you may bet your life I'm going to get used to Harlem, if you people'll let me. I've just got this job, and I'm dead stuck on it. I want to make it go."

"He's mighty different from Biker," said Mrs. Munsberg in an undertone.

"Where's dod oder feller?" inquired Munsberg. "He vas a dam fool, dot oder feller, half corned most de time, an' puttin' on Clarence airs. No one was goin' to give him nothin'. He made folks mad at de start."

"I've got his job," said Tembarom, "and if I can't make it go, the page will be given up. It'll be my fault if that happens, not Harlem's. There's society enough up-town to make a first-class page,

and I shall be sick if I can't get on to it."

He had begun to know his people. Munsberg was a good-natured, swaggering little Hebrew.

That the young fellow should make a clean breast of it and claim no down-town superiority, and that he should also have the business insight to realize that he might obtain valuable society items from such a representative confectioner as M. Munsberg, was a situation to incite amiable sentiments.

"Vell, you didn't come to de wrong place," he said. "All de biggest things comes to me, an' I don't mind tellin' you about 'em. 'T ain't goin' to do no harm. Weddings an' things dey ought to be wrote up, anyhow, if dey're done right. It's good for business. Vy don't dey have no pictures of de supper-tables? Dot'd be good."

"There's lots of receptions and weddings this month," said Mrs. Munsberg, becoming agreeably excited. "And there's plenty handsome young girls that'd like their pictures published.

"None of them have been in Sunday papers before, and they'd like it. The four Schwartz girls would make grand pictures. They dress splendid, and their bridesmaids dresses came from the biggest place in Fift' Avenoo."

"Say," exclaimed Tembarom, rising from his chair, "I'm in luck. Luck struck me the minute I turned in here. If you'll tell me where Schwartz lives, and where the hall is, and the church, and just anything else I can use, I'll go out and whoop up a page to beat the band." He was glowing with exultation. "I know I can do it. You've started me off."

Munsberg and his wife began to warm. It was almost as though they had charge of the society page themselves. There was something stimulating in the idea. There was a suggestion of social importance in it. They knew a number of people who would be pleased with the prospect of being in the Sunday Earth. They were of a race which holds together, and they gave not only the names and addresses of prospective entertainers, but those of florists and owners of halls where parties were given.

Mrs. Munsberg gave the name of a dressmaker of whom she shrewdly guessed that she would be amiably ready to talk to a society-page reporter.

"That Biker feller," she said, "got things down all wrong. He called fine white satin 'white nun's-veiling,' and he left out things. Never said nothing about Miss Lewishon's diamond ring what her grandpa gave her for a wedding-present. An' it cost two hundred and fifty."

"Well, I'm a pretty big fool myself," said Tembarom, "but I should



have known better than that."

When he opened the door to go, Mrs. Munsberg called after him:

"When you get through, you come back here and tell us what you done. I'll give you a cup of hot coffee."

He returned to Mrs. Bowse's boarding-house so late that night that even Steinberger and Bowles had ended their day. The gas in the hall was turned down to a glimmering point, and the house was silent for the night. Even a cat who stole to him and rubbed herself against his leg miauwed in a sort of abortive whisper, opening her mouth wide, but emitting no sound. When he went cautiously up the staircase he carried his damp overcoat with him, and hung it in company with the tartan muffler close to the heater in the upper hall. Then he laid on his bedside table a package of papers and photographs.

After he had undressed, he dropped heavily into bed, exhausted, but elate.

"I'm dog-tired," he said, "but I guess I've got it going." And almost before the last word had uttered itself he fell into the deep sleep of worn-out youth.