## CHAPTER VI

His was the opening incident of the series of extraordinary and altogether incongruous events which took place afterwards, as it appeared to T. Tembarom, like scenes in a play in which he had become involved in a manner which one might be inclined to regard humorously and make jokes about, because it was a thousand miles away from anything like real life. That was the way it struck him. The events referred to, it was true, were things one now and then read about in newspapers, but while the world realized that they were actual occurrences, one rather regarded them, when their parallels were reproduced in books and plays, as belonging alone to the world of pure and highly romantic fiction.

"I guess the reason why it seems that way," he summed it up to Hutchinson and Little Ann, after the worst had come to the worst, "is because we've not only never known any one it's happened to, but we've never known any one that's known any one it's happened to. I've got to own up that it makes me feel as if the fellows'd just yell right out laughing when they heard it."

The stranger's money had been safely deposited in a bank, and the stranger himself still occupied Tembarom's bedroom. He slept a great deal and was very quiet. With great difficulty Little Ann had persuaded him to let a doctor see him, and the doctor had been much

interested in his case. He had expected to find some signs of his having received accidentally or otherwise a blow upon the head, but on examination he found no scar or wound. The condition he was in was frequently the result of concussion of the brain, sometimes of prolonged nervous strain or harrowing mental shock. Such cases occurred not infrequently. Quiet and entire freedom from excitement would do more for such a condition than anything else. If he was afraid of strangers, by all means keep them from him. Tembarom had been quite right in letting him think he would help him to remember, and that somehow he would in the end reach the place he had evidently set out to go to. Nothing must be allowed to excite him. It was well he had had money on his person and that he had fallen into friendly hands. A city hospital would not have been likely to help him greatly. The restraint of its necessary discipline might have alarmed him.

So long as he was persuaded that Tembarom was not going to desert him, he was comparatively calm, though sunk in a piteous and tormented melancholy. His worst hours were when he sat alone in the hall bedroom, with his face buried in his hands. He would so sit without moving or speaking, and Little Ann discovered that at these times he was trying to remember. Sometimes he would suddenly rise and walk about the little room, muttering, with woe in his eyes. Ann, who saw how hard this was for him, found also that to attempt to check or distract him was even worse. When, sitting in her father's room, which was on the other side of the wall, she heard his fretted, hurried pacing feet, her face lost its dimpled cheerfulness. She wondered if

her mother would not have discovered some way of clearing the black cloud distracting his brain. Nothing would induce him to go down to the boarders' dining-room for his meals, and the sight of a servant alarmed him so that it was Ann who took him the scant food he would eat. As the time of her return to England with her father drew near, she wondered what Mr. Tembarom would do without her services. It was she who suggested that they must have a name for him, and the name of a part of Manchester had provided one. There was a place called Strangeways, and one night when, in talking to her father, she referred to it in Tembarom's presence, he suddenly seized upon it.

"Strangeways," he said. "That'd make a good-enough name for him. Let's call him Mr. Strangeways. I don't like the way the fellows have of calling him 'the Freak.'"

So the name had been adopted, and soon became an established fact.

"The way I feel about him," Tembarom said, "is that the fellow's not a bit of a joke. What I see is that he's up against about the toughest proposition I've ever known. Gee! that fellow's not crazy. He's worse. If he was out-and-out dippy and didn't know it, he'd be all right. Likely as not he'd be thinking he was the Pope of Rome or Anna Held. What knocks him out is that he's just right enough to know he's wrong, and to be trying to get back. He reminds me of one of those chaps the papers tell about sometimes--fellows that go to work in livery-stables for ten years and call themselves Bill Jones, and then wake up some

morning and remember they're some high-browed minister of the gospel named the Rev. James Cadwallader."

When the curtain drew up on Tembarom's amazing drama, Strangeways had been occupying his bed nearly three weeks, and he himself had been sleeping on a cot Mrs. Bowse had put up for him in his room. The Hutchinsons were on the point of sailing for England--steerage--on the steamship Transatlantic, and Tembarom was secretly torn into fragments, though he had done well with the page and he was daring to believe that at the end of the month Galton would tell him he had "made good" and the work would continue indefinitely.

If that happened, he would be raised to "twenty-five per" and would be a man of means. If the Hutchinsons had not been going away, he would have been floating in clouds of rose color. If he could persuade Little Ann to take him in hand when she'd had time to "try him out," even Hutchinson could not utterly flout a fellow who was making his steady twenty-five per on a big paper, and was on such terms with his boss that he might get other chances. Gee! but he was a fellow that luck just seemed to chase, anyhow! Look at the other chaps, lots of 'em, who knew twice as much as he did, and had lived in decent homes and gone to school and done their darned best, too, and then hadn't been able to get there! It didn't seem fair somehow that he should run into such pure luck.

The day arrived when Galton was to give his decision. Tembarom was

going to hand in his page, and while he was naturally a trifle nervous, his nervousness would have been a hopeful and not unpleasant thing but that the Transatlantic sailed in two days, and in the Hutchinson's rooms Little Ann was packing her small trunk and her father's bigger one, which held more models and drawings than clothing. Hutchinson was redder in the face than usual, and indignant condemnation of America and American millionaires possessed his soul. Everybody was rather depressed. One boarder after another had wakened to a realization that, with the passing of Little Ann, Mrs. Bowse's establishment, even with the parlor, the cozy-corner, and the second-hand pianola to support it, would be a deserted-seeming thing. Mrs. Bowse felt the tone of low spirits about the table, and even had a horrible secret fear that certain of her best boarders might decide to go elsewhere, merely to change surroundings from which they missed something. Her eyes were a little red, and she made great efforts to keep things going.

"I can only keep the place up when I've no empty rooms, "she had said to Mrs. Peck, "but I'd have boarded her free if her father would have let her stay. But he wouldn't, and, anyway, she'd no more let him go off alone than she'd jump off Brooklyn Bridge."

It had been arranged that partly as a farewell banquet and partly to celebrate Galton's decision about the page, there was to be an oyster stew that night in Mr. Hutchinson's room, which was distinguished as a bed-sitting-room. Tembarom had diplomatically suggested it to Mr.

Hutchinson. It was to be Tembarom's oyster supper, and somehow he managed to convey that it was only a proper and modest tribute to Mr. Hutchinson himself. First-class oyster stew and pale ale were not so bad when properly suggested, therefore Mr. Hutchinson consented. Jim Bowles and Julius Steinberger were to come in to share the feast, and Mrs. Bowse had promised to prepare.

It was not an inspiring day for Little Ann. New York had seemed a bewildering and far too noisy place for her when she had come to it directly from her grandmother's cottage in the English village, where she had spent her last three months before leaving England. The dark rooms of the five-storied boarding-house had seemed gloomy enough to her, and she had found it much more difficult to adjust herself to her surroundings than she could have been induced to admit to her father. At first his temper and the open contempt for American habits and institutions which he called "speaking his mind" had given her a great deal of careful steering through shoals to do. At the outset the boarders had resented him, and sometimes had snapped back their own views of England and courts. Violent and disparaging argument had occasionally been imminent, and Mrs. Bowse had worn an ominous look. Their rooms had in fact been "wanted" before their first week had come to an end, and Little Ann herself scarcely knew how she had tided over that situation. But tide it over she did, and by supernatural effort and watchfulness she contrived to soothe Mrs. Bowse until she had been in the house long enough to make friends with people and aid her father to realize that, if they went elsewhere, they might find only

the same class of boarders, and there would be the cost of moving to consider. She had beguiled an armchair from Mrs. Bowse, and had re-covered it herself with a remnant of crimson stuff secured from a miscellaneous heap at a marked-down sale at a department store. She had arranged his books and papers adroitly and had kept them in their places so that he never felt himself obliged to search for any one of them. With many little contrivances she had given his bed-sitting-room a look of comfort and established homeliness, and he had even begun to like it.

"Tha't just like tha mother, Ann," he had said. "She'd make a railway station look as if it had been lived in."

Then Tembarom had appeared, heralded by Mrs. Bowse and the G. Destroyer, and the first time their eyes had met across the table she had liked him. The liking had increased. There was that in his boyish cheer and his not-too-well-fed-looking face which called forth maternal interest. As she gradually learned what his life had been, she felt a thrilled anxiety to hear day by day how he was getting on. She listened for details, and felt it necessary to gather herself together in the face of a slight depression when hopes of Galton were less high than usual. His mending was mysteriously done, and in time he knew with amazed gratitude that he was being "looked after." His first thanks were so awkward, but so full of appreciation of unaccustomed luxury, that they almost brought tears to her eyes, since they so clearly illuminated the entire novelty of any attention

whatever.

"I just don't know what to say," he said, shuffling from one foot to another, though his nice grin was at its best. "I've never had a woman do anything for me since I was ten. I guess women do lots of things for most fellows; but, then, they're mothers and sisters and aunts. I appreciate it like--like thunder. I feel as if I was Rockefeller, Miss Ann."

In a short time she had become "Little Ann" to him, as to the rest, and they began to know each other very well. Jim Bowles and Julius Steinberger had not been able to restrain themselves at first from making slangy, yearning love to her, but Tembarom had been different. He had kept himself well in hand. Yes, she had liked T. Tembarom, and as she packed the trunks she realized that the Atlantic Ocean was three thousand miles across, and when two people who had no money were separated by it, they were likely to remain so. Rich people could travel, poor people couldn't. You just stayed where things took you, and you mustn't be silly enough to expect things to happen in your class of life--things like seeing people again. Your life just went on. She kept herself very busy, and did not allow her thoughts any latitude. It would vex her father very much if he thought she had really grown fond of America and was rather sorry to go away. She had finished her packing before evening, and the trunks were labeled and set aside, some in the outside hall and some in the corner of the room. She had sat down with some mending on her lap, and Hutchinson

was walking about the room with the restlessness of the traveler whose approaching journey will not let him settle himself anywhere.

"I'll lay a shilling you've got everything packed and ready, and put just where a chap can lay his hands on it," he said.

"Yes, Father. Your tweed cap's in the big pocket of your thick top-coat, and there's an extra pair of spectacles and your pipe and tobacco in the small one."

"And off we go back to England same as we came!" He rubbed his head, and drew a big, worried sigh. "Where's them going?" he asked, pointing to some newly laundered clothing on a side table. "You haven't forgotten 'em, have you?"

"No, Father. It's just some of the young men's washing. I thought I'd take time to mend them up a bit before I went to bed."

"That's like tha mother, too--taking care of everybody. What did these chaps do before you came?"

"Sometimes they tried to sew on a button or so themselves, but oftener they went without. Men make poor work of sewing. It oughtn't to be expected of them."

Hutchinson stopped and looked her and her mending over with a touch of

curiosity.

"Some of them's Tembarom's?" he asked.

Little Ann held up a pair of socks.

"These are. He does wear them out, poor fellow. It's tramping up and down the streets to save car-fare does it. He's never got a heel to his name. But he's going to be able to buy some new ones next week."

Hutchinson began his tramp again.

"He'll miss thee, Little Ann; but so'll the other lads, for that matter."

"He'll know to-night whether Mr. Galton's going to let him keep his work. I do hope he will. I believe he'd begin to get on."

"Well,"--Hutchinson was just a little grudging even at this comparatively lenient moment,--"I believe the chap'll get on myself. He's got pluck and he's sharp. I never saw him make a poor mouth yet."

"Neither did I," answered Ann.

A door leading into Tembarom's hall bedroom opened on to Hutchinson's. They both heard some one inside the room knock at it. Hutchinson

turned and listened, jerking his head toward the sound.

"There's that poor chap again," he said. "He's wakened and got restless. What's Tembarom going to do with him, I'd like to know? The money won't last forever."

"Shall I let him in, Father? I dare say he's got restless because Mr. Tembarom's not come in."

"Aye, we'll let him in. He won't have thee long. He can't do no harm so long as I'm here."

Little Ann went to the door and opened it. She spoke quietly.

"Do you want to come in here, Mr. Strangeways?"

The man came in. He was clean, but still unshaven, and his clothes looked as though he had been lying down. He looked round the room anxiously.

"Where has he gone?" he demanded in an overstrung voice. "Where is he?" He caught at Ann's sleeve in a sudden access of nervous fear. "What shall I do if he's gone?"

Hutchinson moved toward him.

"'Ere, 'ere," he said, "don't you go catchin' hold of ladies. What do you want?"

I've forgotten his name now. What shall I do if I can't remember?" faltered Strangeways.

Little Ann patted his arm comfortingly.

"There, there, now! You've not really forgotten it. It's just slipped your memory. You want Mr. Tembarom--Mr. T. Tembarom."

"Oh, thank you, thank you. That's it. Yes, Tembarom. He said T. Tembarom. He said he wouldn't throw me over."

Little Ann led him to a seat and made him sit down. She answered him with quiet decision.

"Well, if he said he wouldn't, he won't. Will he, Father?"

"No, he won't." There was rough good nature in Hutchinson's admission. He paused after it to glance at Ann. "You think a lot of that lad, don't you, Ann?"

"Yes, I do, Father," she replied undisturbedly. "He's one you can trust, too. He's up-town at his work," she explained to Strangeways. "He'll be back before long. He's giving us a bit of a supper in here

because we're going away."

Strangeways grew nervous again.

"But he won't go with you? T. Tembarom won't go?"

"No, no; he's not going. He'll stay here," she said soothingly. He had evidently not observed the packed and labeled trunks when he came in. He seemed suddenly to see them now, and rose in distress.

"Whose are these? You said he wasn't going?"

Ann took hold of his arm and led him to the corner.

"They are not Mr. Tembarom's trunks," she explained. "They are father's and mine. Look on the labels. Joseph Hutchinson, Liverpool. Ann Hutchinson, Liverpool."

He looked at them closely in a puzzled way. He read a label aloud in a dragging voice.

"Ann Hutchinson, Liverpool. What's--what's Liverpool?

"Oh, come," encouraged Little Ann, "you know that. It's a place in England. We're going back to England."

He stood and gazed fixedly before him. Then he began to rub his fingers across his forehead. Ann knew the straining look in his eyes. He was making that horrible struggle to get back somewhere through the darkness which shut him in. It was so painful a thing to see that even Hutchinson turned slightly away.

"Don't!" said Little Ann, softly, and tried to draw him away.

He caught his breath convulsively once or twice, and his voice dragged out words again, as though he were dragging them from bottomless depths.

"Going--back--to--England--back to England--to England."

He dropped into a chair near by, his arms thrown over its back, and broke, as his face fell upon them, into heavy, deadly sobbing--the kind of sobbing Tembarom had found it impossible to stand up against. Hutchinson whirled about testily.

"Dang it!" he broke out, "I wish Tembarom'd turn up. What are we to do?" He didn't like it himself. It struck him as unseemly.

But Ann went to the chair, and put her hands on the shuddering shoulder, bending over the soul-wrung creature, the wisdom of centuries in the soft, expostulatory voice which seemed to reach the very darkness he was lost in. It was a wisdom of which she was wholly

unaware, but it had been born with her, and was the building of her being.

"'Sh! 'S-h-h!" she said. "You mustn't do that. Mr. Tembarom wouldn't like you to do it. He'll be in directly. 'Sh! 'Sh, now!" And simple as the words were, their soothing reached him. The wildness of his sobs grew less.

"See here," Hutchinson protested, "this won't do, my man. I won't have it, Ann. I'm upset myself, what with this going back and everything. I can't have a chap coming and crying like that there. It upsets me worse than ever. And you hangin' over him! It won't do."

Strangeways lifted his head from his arms and looked at him.

"Aye, I mean what I say," Hutchinson added fretfully.

Strangeways got up from the chair. When he was not bowed or slouching it was to be seen that he was a tall man with square shoulders. Despite his unshaven, haggard face, he had a sort of presence.

"I'll go back to my room," he said. "I forgot. I ought not to be here."

Neither Hutchinson nor Little Ann had ever seen any one do the thing he did next. When Ann went with him to the door of the hall bedroom,

he took her hand, and bowing low before her, lifted it gently to his lips.

Hutchinson stared at him as he turned into the room and closed the door behind him.

"Well, I've read of lords and ladies doin' that in books," he said, "but I never thought I should see a chap do it myself."

Little Ann went back to her mending, looking very thoughtful.

"Father," she said, after a few moments, "England made him come near to remembering something."

"New York'll come near making me remember a lot of things when I'm out of it," said Mr. Hutchinson, sitting down heavily in his chair and rubbing his head. "Eh, dang it! dang it!"

"Don't you let it, Father," advised Little Ann. "There's never any good in thinking things over."

"You're not as cheerful yourself as you let on," he said. "You've not got much color to-day, my lass."

She rubbed one cheek a little, trying to laugh.

"I shall get it back when we go and stay with grandmother. It's just staying indoors so much. Mr. Tembarom won't be long now; I'll get up and set the table. The things are on a tray outside."

As she was going out of the room, Jim Bowles and Julius Steinberger appeared at the door.

"May we come in?" Jim asked eagerly. "We're invited to the oyster stew, and it's time old T. T. was here. Julius and me are just getting dippy waiting up-stairs to hear if he's made good with Galton."

"Well, now, you sit down and be quiet a bit, or you'll be losing your appetites," advised Ann.

"You can't lose a thing the size of mine," answered Jim, "any more than you could lose the Metropolitan Opera-house."

Ann turned her head and paused as though she were listening. She heard footsteps in the lower hall.

"He's coming now," she announced. "I know his step. He's tired. Don't go yet, you two," she added as the pair prepared to rush to meet him. "When any one's that tired he wants to wash his face, and talk when he's ready. If you'll just go back to your room I'll call you when I've set the table."

She felt that she wanted a little more quiet during the next few minutes than she could have if they remained and talked at the top of elated voices. She had not quite realized how anxiously she had been waiting all day for the hour when she would hear exactly what had happened. If he was all right, it would be a nice thing to remember when she was in England. In this moderate form she expressed herself mentally. "It would be a nice thing to remember." She spread the cloth on the table and began to lay out the plates. Involuntarily she found herself stopping to glance at the hall bedroom door and listen rather intently.

"I hope he's got it. I do that. I'm sure he has. He ought to."

Hutchinson looked over at her. She was that like her mother, that lass!

"You're excited, Ann," he said.

"Yes, Father, I am--a bit. He's--he's washing his face now." Sounds of splashing water could be heard through the intervening door.

Hutchinson watched her with some uneasiness.

"You care a lot for that lad," he said.

She did not look fluttered. Her answer was quite candid.

"I said I did, Father. He's taking off his boots."

"You know every sound he makes, and you're going away Saturday, and you'll never see him again."

"That needn't stop me caring. It never did any one any harm to care for one of his sort."

"But it can't come to anything," Hutchinson began to bluster. "It won't do--"

"He's coming to the door, he's turning the handle," said Little Ann.

Tembarom came in. He was fresh with recent face-washing, and his hair was damp, so that a short lock curled and stood up. He had been up-town making frantic efforts for hours, but he had been making them in a spirit of victorious relief, and he did not look tired at all.

"I've got it!" he cried out the moment he entered. "I've got it, by jingo! The job's mine for keeps."

"Galton's give it to you out and out?" Hutchinson was slightly excited himself.

"He's in the bulliest humor you ever saw. He says I've done first-

rate, and if I go on, he'll run me up to thirty."

"Well, I'm danged glad of it, lad, that I am!" Hutchinson gave in handsomely. "You put backbone into it."

Little Ann stood near, smiling. Her smile met Tembarom's.

"I know you're glad, Little Ann," he said. "I'd never have got there but for you. It was up to me, after the way you started me."

"You know I'm glad without me telling you," she answered. "I'm RIGHTDOWN glad."

And it was at this moment that Mrs. Bowse came into the room.

"It's too bad it's happened just now," she said, much flustered. "That's the way with things. The stew'll spoil, but he says it's real important."

Tembarom caught at both her hands and shook them.

"I've got it, Mrs. Bowse. Here's your society reporter! The best-looking boarder you've got is going to be able to pay his board steady."

"I'm as glad as can be, and so will everybody be. I knew you'd get it.

But this gentleman's been here twice to-day. He says he really must see you."

"Let him wait," Hutchinson ordered. "What's the chap want? The stew won't be fit to eat."

"No, it won't," answered Mrs. Bowse; "but he seems to think he's not the kind to be put off. He says it's more Mr. Tembarom's business than his. He looked real mad when I showed him into the parlor, where they were playing the pianola. He asked wasn't there a private room where you could talk."

A certain flurried interest in the manner of Mrs. Bowse, a something not usually awakened by inopportune callers, an actual suggestion of the possible fact that she was not as indifferent as she was nervous, somewhat awakened Mr. Hutchinson's curiosity.

"Look here," he volunteered," if he's got any real business, he can't talk over to the tune of the pianola you can bring him up here, Tembarom. I'll see he don't stay long if his business isn't worth talkin' about. He'll see the table set for supper, and that'll hurry him."

"Oh, gee I wish he hadn't come!" said Tembarom. "I'll just go down and see what he wants. No one's got any swell private business with me."

"You bring him up if he has," said Hutchinson. "We'd like to hear about it."

Tembarom ran down the stairs quickly.

No one had ever wanted to see him on business before. There was something important-sounding about it; perhaps things were starting up for him in real earnest. It might be a message from Galton, though he could not believe that he had at this early stage reached such a distinction. A ghastly thought shot a bolt at him, but he shook himself free of it.

"He's not a fellow to go back on his word, anyhow," he insisted.

There were more boarders than usual in the parlor. The young woman from the notion counter had company; and one of her guests was playing "He sut'nly was Good to Me" on the pianola with loud and steady tread of pedal.

The new arrival had evidently not thought it worth his while to commit himself to permanency by taking a seat. He was standing not far from the door with a businesslike-looking envelop in one hand and a pince-nez in the other, with which Tembarom saw he was rather fretfully tapping the envelop as he looked about him. He was plainly taking in the characteristics of the room, and was not leniently disposed toward them. His tailor was clearly an excellent one, with entirely correct

ideas as to the cut and material which exactly befitted an elderly gentleman of some impressiveness in the position, whatsoever it happened to be, which he held. His face was not of a friendly type, and his eyes held cold irritation discreetly restrained by businesslike civility. Tembarom vaguely felt the genialities of the oyster supper assume a rather fourth-rate air.

The caller advanced and spoke first.

"Mr. Tembarom?" he inquired.

"Yes," Tembarom answered, "I'm T. Tembarom."

"T.," repeated the stranger, with a slightly puzzled expression. "Ah, yes; I see. I beg pardon."

In that moment Tembarom felt that he was looked over, taken in, summed up, and without favor. The sharp, steady eye, however, did not seem to have moved from his face. At the same time it had aided him to realize that he was, to this well-dressed person at least, a too exhilarated young man wearing a ten-dollar "hand-me-down."

"My name is Palford," he said concisely. "That will convey nothing to you. I am of the firm of Palford & Grimby of Lincoln's Inn. This is my card."

Tembarom took the card and read that Palford & Grimby were "solicitors," and he was not sure that he knew exactly what "solicitors" were.

"Lincoln's Inn?" he hesitated. "That's not in New York, is it?"

"No, Mr. Tembarom; in London. I come from England."

"You must have had bad weather crossing," said Tembarom, with amiable intent. Somehow Mr. Palford presented a more unyielding surface than he was accustomed to. And yet his hard courtesy was quite perfect.

"I have been here some weeks."

"I hope you like New York. Won't you have a seat?"

The young lady from the notion counter and her friends began to sing the chorus of "He sut'nly was Good to Me" with quite professional negro accent.

"That's just the way May Irwin done it," one of them laughed.

Mr. Palford glanced at the performers. He did not say whether he liked New York or not.

"I asked your landlady if we could not see each other in a private

room," he said. "It would not be possible to talk quietly here."

"We shouldn't have much of a show," answered Tembarom, inwardly wishing he knew what was going to happen. "But there are no private rooms in the house. We can be quieter than this, though, if we go up stairs to Mr. Hutchinson's room. He said I could bring you."

"That would be much better," replied Mr. Palford.

Tembarom led him out of the room, up the first steep and narrow flight of stairs, along the narrow hall to the second, up that, down another hall to the third, up the third, and on to the fourth. As he led the way he realized again that the worn carpets, the steep narrowness, and the pieces of paper unfortunately stripped off the wall at intervals, were being rather counted against him. This man had probably never been in a place like this before in his life, and he didn't take to it.

At the Hutchinsons' door he stopped and explained:

"We were going to have an oyster stew here because the Hutchinsons are going away; but Mr. Hutchinson said we could come up."

"Very kind of Mr. Hutchinson, I'm sure."

Despite his stiffly collected bearing, Mr. Palford looked perhaps

slightly nervous when he was handed into the bed-sitting-room, and found himself confronting Hutchinson and Little Ann and the table set for the oyster stew. It is true that he had never been in such a place in his life, that for many reasons he was appalled, and that he was beset by a fear that he might be grotesquely compelled by existing circumstances to accept these people's invitation, if they insisted upon his sitting down with them and sharing their oyster stew. One could not calculate on what would happen among these unknown quantities. It might be their idea of boarding-house politeness. And how could one offend them? God forbid that the situation should intensify itself in such an absurdly trying manner! What a bounder the unfortunate young man was! His own experience had not been such as to assist him to any realistic enlightenment regarding him, even when he had seen the society page and had learned that he had charge of it.

"Let me make you acquainted with Mr. and Miss Hutchinson," Tembarom introduced. "This is Mr. Palford, Mr. Hutchinson."

Hutchinson, half hidden behind his newspaper, jerked his head and grunted:

"Glad to see you, sir."

Mr. Palford bowed, and took the chair Tembarom presented.

"I am much obliged to you, Mr. Hutchinson, for allowing me to come to

your room. I have business to discuss with Mr. Tembarom, and the pianola was being played down-stairs--rather loudly."

"They do it every night, dang 'em! Right under my bed," growled Hutchinson. "You're an Englishman, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"So am I, thank God! " Hutchinson devoutly gave forth.

Little Ann rose from her chair, sewing in hand.

"Father'll come and sit with me in my room," she said.

Hutchinson looked grumpy. He did not intend to leave the field clear and the stew to its fate if he could help it. He gave Ann a protesting frown.

"I dare say Mr. Palford doesn't mind us," he said. "We're not strangers."

"Not in the least," Palford protested. "Certainly not. If you are old friends, you may be able to assist us."

"Well, I don't know about that," Hutchinson answered, "We've not known him long, but we know him pretty well. You come from London, don't

you? "

"Yes. From Lincoln's Inn Fields."

"Law?" grunted Hutchinson.

"Yes. Of the firm of Palford & Grimby."

Hutchinson moved in his chair involuntarily. There was stimulation to curiosity in this. This chap was a regular top sawyer--clothes, way of pronouncing his words, manners, everything. No mistaking him--old family solicitor sort of chap. What on earth could he have to say to Tembarom? Tembarom himself had sat down and could not be said to look at his ease.

"I do not intrude without the excuse of serious business," Palford explained to him. "A great deal of careful research and inquiry has finally led me here. I am compelled to believe I have followed the right clue, but I must ask you a few questions. Your name is not really Tembarom, is it?"

Hutchinson looked at Tembarom sharply.

"Not Tembarom? What does he mean, lad?"

Tembarom's grin was at once boyish and ashamed.

"Well, it is in one way," he answered, "and it isn't in another. The fellows at school got into the way of calling me that way,--to save time, I guess,--and I got to like it. They'd have guyed my real name. Most of them never knew it. I can't see why any one ever called a child by such a fool name, anyhow."

"What was it exactly?"

Tembarom looked almost sheepish.

"It sounds like a thing in a novel. It was Temple Temple Barholm. Two Temples, by gee! As if one wasn't enough!"

Joseph Hutchinson dropped his paper and almost started from his chair. His red face suddenly became so much redder that he looked a trifle apoplectic.

"Temple Barholm does tha say?" he cried out.

Mr. Palford raised his hand and checked him, but with a suggestion of stiff apology.

"If you will kindly allow me. Did you ever hear your father refer to a place called Temple Barholm?" he inquired.

Tembarom reflected as though sending his thoughts backward into a pretty thoroughly forgotten and ignored past. There had been no reason connected with filial affection which should have caused him to recall memories of his father. They had not liked each other. He had known that he had been resented and looked down upon as a characteristically American product. His father had more than once said he was a "common American lad," and he had known he was.

"Seems to me," he said at last, "that once when he was pretty mad at his luck I heard him grumbling about English laws, and he said some of his distant relations were swell people who would never think of speaking to him,--perhaps didn't know he was alive,--and they lived in a big way in a place that was named after the family. He never saw it or them, and he said that was the way in England--one fellow got everything and the rest were paupers like himself. He'd always been poor."

"Yes, the relation was a distant one. Until this investigation began the family knew nothing of him. The inquiry has been a tiresome one. I trust I am reaching the end of it. We have given nearly two years to following this clue."

"What for?" burst forth Tembarom, sitting upright.

"Because it was necessary to find either George Temple Barholm or his son, if he had one."

"I'm his son, all right, but he died when I was eight years old," Tembarom volunteered. "I don't remember much about him."

"You remember that he was not an American?"

"He was English. Hated it; but he wasn't fond of America."

"Have you any papers belonging to him?"

Tembarom hesitated again.

"There's a few old letters--oh, and one of those glass photographs in a case. I believe it's my grandfather and grandmother, taken when they were married. Him on a chair, you know, and her standing with her hand on his shoulder."

"Can you show them to me?" Palford suggested.

"Sure," Tembarom answered, getting up from his seat "They're in my room. I turned them up yesterday among some other things."

When he left them, Mr. Palford sat gently rubbing his chin. Hutchinson wanted to burst forth with questions, but he looked so remote and acidly dignified that there was a suggestion of boldness in the idea of intruding on his reflections. Hutchinson stared at him and breathed

hard and short in his suspense. The stiff old chap was thinking things over and putting things together in his lawyer's way. He was entirely oblivious to his surroundings. Little Ann went on with her mending, but she wore her absorbed look, and it was not a result of her work.

Tembarom came back with some papers in his hand. They were yellowed old letters, and on the top of the package there was a worn daguerreotype-case with broken clasp.

"Here they are," he said, giving them to Palford. "I guess they'd just been married," opening the case. "Get on to her embroidered collar and big breast-pin with his picture in it. That's English enough, isn't it? He'd given it to her for a wedding-present. There's something in one of the letters about it."

It was the letters to which Mr. Palford gave the most attention. He read them and examined post-marks and dates. When he had finished, he rose from his chair with a slightly portentous touch of professional ceremony.

"Yes, those are sufficiently convincing. You are a very fortunate young man. Allow me to congratulate you."

He did not look particularly pleased, though he extended his hand and shook Tembarom's politely. He was rigorously endeavoring to conceal that he found himself called upon to make the best of an extremely bad

job. Hutchinson started forward, resting his hands on his knees and glaring with ill-suppressed excitement.

"What's that for?" Tembarom said. He felt rather like a fool. He laughed half nervously. It seemed to be up to him to understand, and he didn't understand in the least.

"You have, through your father's distant relationship, inherited a very magnificent property--the estate of Temple Barholm in Lancashire," Palford began to explain, but Mr. Hutchinson sprang from his chair outright, crushing his paper in his hand.

"Temple Barholm!" he almost shouted, "I dunnot believe thee! Why, it's one of th' oldest places in England and one of th' biggest. Th' Temple Barholms as didn't come over with th' Conqueror was there before him. Some of them was Saxon kings! And him--" pointing a stumpy, red finger disparagingly at Tembarom, aghast and incredulous--"that New York lad that's sold newspapers in the streets--you say he's come into it?"

"Precisely." Mr. Palford spoke with some crispness of diction. Noise and bluster annoyed him. "That is my business here. Mr. Tembarom is, in fact, Mr. Temple Temple Barholm of Temple Barholm, which you seem to have heard of."

"Heard of it! My mother was born in the village an' lives there yet. Art tha struck dumb, lad!" he said almost fiercely to Tembarom. "By

Judd! Tha well may be!"

Tembarom was standing holding the back of a chair. He was pale, and had once opened his mouth, and then gulped and shut it. Little Ann had dropped her sewing. His first look had leaped to her, and she had looked back straight into his eyes.

"I'm struck something," he said, his half-laugh slightly unsteady. "Who'd blame me?"

"You'd better sit down," said Little Ann. "Sudden things are upsetting."

He did sit down. He felt rather shaky. He touched himself on his chest and laughed again.

"Me!" he said. "T. T.! Hully gee! It's like a turn at a vaudeville."

The sentiment prevailing in Hutchinson's mind seemed to verge on indignation.

"Thee th' master of Temple Barholm! " he ejaculated. "Why, it stood for seventy thousand pound' a year!"

"It did and it does," said Mr. Palford, curtly. He had less and less taste for the situation. There was neither dignity nor proper

sentiment in it. The young man was utterly incapable of comprehending the meaning and proportions of the extraordinary event which had befallen him. It appeared to present to him the aspect of a somewhat slangy New York joke.

"You do not seem much impressed, Mr. Temple Barholm," he said.

"Oh, I'm impressed, all right," answered Tembarom, "but, say, this thing can't be true! You couldn't make it true if you sat up all night to do it."

"When I go into the business details of the matter tomorrow morning you will realize the truth of it," said Mr. Palford. "Seventy thousand pounds a year--and Temple Barholm--are not unsubstantial facts."

"Three hundred and fifty thousand dollars, my lad--that's what it stands for!" put in Mr. Hutchinson.

"Well," said Tembarom, "I guess I can worry along on that if I try hard enough. I mayn't be able to keep myself in the way I've been used to, but I've got to make it do."

Mr. Palford stiffened. He did not know that the garish, flippant-sounding joking was the kind of defense the streets of New York had provided Mr. Temple Barholm with in many an hour when he had been a half-clad newsboy with an empty stomach, and a bundle of unsold

newspapers under his arm.

"You are jocular," he said. "I find the New Yorkers are given to being jocular--continuously."

Tembarom looked at him rather searchingly. Palford wouldn't have found it possible to believe that the young man knew all about his distaste and its near approach to disgust, that he knew quite well what he thought of his ten-dollar suit, his ex-newsboy's diction, and his entire incongruousness as a factor in any circumstances connected with dignity and splendor. He would certainly not have credited the fact that though he had not the remotest idea what sort of a place Temple Barholm was, and what sort of men its long line of possessors had been, he had gained a curious knowledge of their significance through the mental attitude of their legal representative when he for a moment failed to conceal his sense of actual revolt.

"It seems sort of like a joke till you get on to it," he said. "But I guess it ain't such a merry jest as it seems."

And then Mr. Palford did begin to observe that he had lost his color entirely; also that he had a rather decent, sharp-cut face, and extremely white and good young teeth, which he showed not unattractively when he smiled. And he smiled frequently, but he was not smiling now.