CHAPTER XII

The chief objection to Temple Barholm in Tembarom's mind was that it was too big for any human use. That at least was how it struck him. The entrance was too big, the stairs were too wide, the rooms too broad and too long and too high to allow of eyes accustomed to hall bedrooms adjusting their vision without discomfort. The dining-room in which the new owner took his first meal in company with Mr. Palford, and attended by the large, serious man who wore no livery and three tall footmen who did, was of a size and stateliness which made him feel homesick for Mrs. Bowse's dining-room, with its two hurried, incompetent, and often-changed waitresses and its prevailing friendly custom of pushing things across the table to save time. Meals were quickly disposed of at Mrs. Bowse's. Everybody was due up-town or down-town, and regarded food as an unavoidable, because necessary, interference with more urgent business. At Temple Barholm one sat half the night-- this was the impression made upon Tembarom--watching things being brought in and taken out of the room, carved on a huge buffet, and passed from one man to another; and when they were brought solemnly to you, if you turned them down, it seemed that the whole ceremony had to be gone through with again. All sorts of silver knives, forks, and spoons were given to one and taken away, and half a dozen sorts of glasses stood by your plate; and if you made a move to do anything for yourself, the man out of livery stopped you as though you were too big a fool to be trusted. The food was all right, but

when you knew what anything was, and were inclined to welcome it as an old friend, it was given to you in some way that made you get rattled. With all the swell dishes, you had no butter-plate, and ice seemed scarce, and the dead, still way the servants moved about gave you a sort of feeling that you were at a funeral and that it wasn't decent to talk so long as the remains were in the room. The head-man and the foot-men seemed to get on by signs, though Tembarom never saw them making any; and their faces never changed for a moment. Once or twice he tried a joke, addressing it to Mr. Palford, to see what would happen. But as Mr. Palford did not seem to see the humor of it, and gave him the "glassy eye," and neither the head-man nor the footmen seemed to hear it, he thought that perhaps they didn't know it was a joke; and if they didn't, and they thought anything at all, they must think he was dippy. The dinner was a deadly, though sumptuous, meal, and long drawn out, when measured by meals at Mrs. Bowse's. He did not know, as Mr. Palford did, that it was perfect, and served with a finished dexterity that was also perfection.

Mr. Palford, however, was himself relieved when it was at an end. He had sat at dinner with the late Mr. Temple Barholm in his day, and had seen him also served by the owners of impassive countenances; but he had been aware that whatsoever of secret dislike and resentment was concealed by them, there lay behind their immovability an acceptance of the fact that he represented, even in his most objectionable humors, centuries of accustomedness to respectful service and of knowledge of his right and power to claim it. The solicitor was keenly

aware of the silent comments being made upon the tweed suit and brown necktie and on the manner in which their wearer boldly chose the wrong fork or erroneously made use of a knife or spoon. Later in the evening, in the servants' hall, the comment would not be silent, and there could be no doubt of what its character would be. There would be laughter and the relating of incidents. Housemaids and still-room maids would giggle, and kitchen-maids and boot-boys would grin and whisper in servile tribute to the witticisms of the superior servants.

After dinner the rest of the evening could at least be spent in talk about business matters. There still remained details to be enlarged upon before Palford himself returned to Lincoln's Inn and left Mr. Temple Barholm to the care of the steward of his estate. It was not difficult to talk to him when the sole subject of conversation was of a business nature.

Before they parted for the night the mystery of the arrangements made for Strangeways had been cleared. In fact, Mr. Temple Barholm made no mystery of them. He did not seem ignorant of the fact that what he had chosen to do was unusual, but he did not appear hampered or embarrassed by the knowledge. His remarks on the subject were entirely civil and were far from actually suggesting that his singular conduct was purely his own business and none of his solicitor's; but for a moment or so Mr. Palford was privately just a trifle annoyed. The Hutchinsons had traveled from London with Strangeways in their care the day before. He would have been unhappy and disturbed if he had

been obliged to travel with Mr. Palford, who was a stranger to him, and Miss Hutchinson had a soothing effect on him. Strangeways was for the present comfortably installed as a guest of the house, Miss Hutchinson having talked to the housekeeper, Mrs. Butterworth, and to Pearson. What the future held for him Mr. Temple Barholm did not seem to feel the necessity of going into. He left him behind as a subject, and went on talking cheerfully of other things almost as if he had forgotten him.

They had their coffee in the library, and afterward sat at the writing-table and looked over documents and talked until Mr. Palford felt that he could quite decorously retire to his bedroom. He was glad to be relieved of his duties, and Tembarom was amiably resigned to parting with him.

Tembarom did not go up-stairs at once himself. He sat by the fire and smoked several pipes of tobacco and thought things over. There were a lot of things to think over, and several decisions to make, and he thought it would be a good idea to pass them in review. The quiet of the dead surrounded him. In a house the size of this the servants were probably half a mile away. They'd need trolleys to get to one, he thought, if you rang for them in a hurry. If an armed burglar made a quiet entry without your knowing it, he could get in some pretty rough work before any of the seventy-five footmen could come to lend a hand. He was not aware that there were two of them standing in waiting in the hall, their powdered heads close together, so that their whispers

and chuckles could be heard. A sound of movement in the library would have brought them up standing to a decorous attitude of attention conveying to the uninitiated the impression that they had not moved for hours.

Sometimes as he sat in the big morocco chair, T. Tembarom looked grave enough; sometimes he looked as though he was confronting problems which needed puzzling out and with which he was not making much headway; sometimes he looked as though he was thinking of little Ann Hutchinson, and not infrequently he grinned. Here he was up to the neck in it, and he was darned if he knew what he was going to do. He didn't know a soul, and nobody knew him. He didn't know a thing he ought to know, and he didn't know any one who could tell him. Even the Hutchinsons had never been inside a place like Temple Barholm, and they were going back to Manchester after a few weeks' stay at the grandmother's cottage.

Before he had left New York he had seen Hadman and some other fellows and got things started, so that there was an even chance that the invention would be put on its feet. He had worked hard and used his own power to control money in the future as a lever which had proved to be exactly what was needed.

Hadman had been spurred and a little startled when he realized the magnitude of what really could be done, and saw also that this slangy, moneyed youth was not merely an enthusiastic fool, but saw into

business schemes pretty sharply and was of a most determined readiness. With this power ranging itself on the side of Hutchinson and his invention, it was good business to begin to move, if one did not want to run a chance of being left out in the cold.

Hutchinson had gone to Manchester, and there had been barely time for a brief but characteristic interview between him and Tembarom, when he rushed back to London. Tembarom felt rather excited when he remembered it, recalling what he had felt in confronting the struggles against emotion in the blunt-featured, red face, the breaks in the rough voice, the charging up and down the room like a curiously elated bull in a china shop, and the big effort to restrain relief and gratitude the degree of which might seem to under-value the merits of the invention itself.

Once or twice when he looked serious, Tembarom was thinking this over, and also once or twice when he grinned. Relief and gratitude notwithstanding, Hutchinson had kept him in his place, and had not made unbounded efforts to conceal his sense of the incongruity of his position as the controller of fortunes and the lord of Temple Barholm, which was still vaguely flavored with indignation.

When he had finished his last pipe, Tembarom rose and knocked the ashes out of it.

"Now for Pearson," he said.

He had made up his mind to have a talk with Pearson, and there was no use wasting time. If things didn't suit you, the best thing was to see what you could do to fix them right away --if it wasn't against the law. He went out into the hall, and seeing the two footmen standing waiting, he spoke to them.

"Say, I didn't know you fellows were there," he said. "Are you waiting up for me? Well, you can go to bed, the sooner the quicker. Good night." And he went up-stairs whistling.

The glow and richness and ceremonial order of preparation in his bedroom struck him as soon as he opened the door. Everything which could possibly have been made ready for his most luxurious comfort had been made ready. He did not, it is true, care much for the huge bed with its carved oak canopy and massive pillars.

"But the lying-down part looks about all right," he said to himself.

The fine linen, the soft pillows, the downy blankets, would have allured even a man who was not tired. The covering had been neatly turned back and the snowy whiteness opened. That was English, he supposed. They hadn't got on to that at Mrs. Bowse's.

"But I guess a plain little old New York sleep will do," he said. "Temple Barholm or no Temple Barholm, I guess they can't change that."

Then there sounded a quiet knock at the door. He knew who it would turn out to be, and he was not mistaken. Pearson stood in the corridor, wearing his slightly anxious expression, but ready for orders.

Mr. Temple Barholm looked down at him with a friendly, if unusual, air.

"Say, Pearson," he announced, "if you've come to wash my face and put my hair up in crimping-pins, you needn't do it, because I'm not used to it. But come on in."

If he had told Pearson to enter and climb the chimney, it cannot be said that the order would have been obeyed upon the spot, but Pearson would certainly have hesitated and explained with respectful delicacy the fact that the task was not "his place." He came into the room.

"I came to see, if I could do anything further and--" making a courageous onslaught upon the situation for which he had been preparing himself for hours--"and also--if it is not too late--to venture to trouble you with regard to your wardrobe." He coughed a low, embarrassed cough. "In unpacking, sir, I found--I did not find--"

"You didn't find much, did you?" Tembarom assisted him.

"Of course, sir," Pearson apologized, "leaving New York so hurriedly, your--your man evidently had not time to-- er--"

Tembarom looked at him a few seconds longer, as if making up his mind to something. Then he threw himself easily into the big chair by the fire, and leaned back in it with the frankest and best- natured smile possible.

"I hadn't any man," he said. "Say, Pearson," waving his hand to another chair near by, "suppose you take a seat."

Long and careful training came to Pearson's aid and supported him, but he was afraid that he looked nervous, and certainly there was a lack of entire calm in his voice.

"I--thank you, sir,--I think I'd better stand, sir."

"Why?" inquired Tembarom, taking his tobacco-pouch out of his pocket and preparing to fill another pipe.

"You're most kind, sir, but--but--" in impassioned embarrassment--"I should really PREFER to stand, sir, if you don't mind. I should feel more--more at 'ome, sir," he added, dropping an h in his agitation.

"Well, if you'd like it better, that's all right," yielded Mr. Temple Barholm, stuffing tobacco into the pipe. Pearson darted to a table,

produced a match, struck it, and gave it to him.

"Thank you," said Tembarom, still good-naturedly. "But there are a few things I've GOT to say to you RIGHT now."

Pearson had really done his best, his very best, but he was terrified because of the certain circumstances once before referred to.

"I beg pardon, sir," he appealed, "but I am most anxious to give satisfaction in every respect." He WAS, poor young man, horribly anxious. "To-day being only the first day, I dare say I have not been all I should have been. I have never valeted an American gentleman before, but I'm sure I shall become accustomed to everything QUITE soon--almost immediately."

"Say," broke in Tembarom, "you're 'way off. I'm not complaining. You're all right."

The easy good temper of his manner was so singularly assuring that Pearson, unexplainable as he found him in every other respect, knew that this at least was to be depended upon, and he drew an almost palpable breath of relief. Something actually allured him into approaching what he had never felt it safe to approach before under like circumstances--a confidential disclosure.

"Thank you, sir: I am most grateful. The--fact is, I hoped especially

to be able to settle in place just now. I--I'm hoping to save up enough to get married, sir."

"You are?" Tembarom exclaimed. "Good business! So was I before all this"--he glanced about him--"fell on top of me."

"I've been saving for three years, sir, and if I can know I'm a permanency--if I can keep this place--"

"You're going to keep it all right," Tembarom cheered him up with. "If you've got an idea you're going to be fired, just you forget it. Cut it right out."

"Is--I beg your pardon, sir," Pearson asked with timorous joy, "but is that the American for saying you'll be good enough to keep me on?"

Mr. Temple Barholm thought a second.

"Is 'keep me on' the English for 'let me stay'?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then we're all right. Let's start from there. I'm going to have a heart-to-heart talk with you, Pearson."

"Thank you, sir," said Pearson in a deferential murmur. But if he was

not dissatisfied, what was going to happen?

"It'll save us both trouble, and me most. I'm not one of those clever Clarences that can keep up a bluff, making out I know things I don't know. I couldn't deceive a setting hen or a Berlin wool antimacassar."

Pearson swallowed something with effort.

"You see, I fell into this thing KERCHUNK, and I'm just RATTLED--I'm rattled." As Pearson slightly coughed again, he translated for him, "That's American for 'I don't know where I'm at'."

"Those American jokes, sir, are very funny indeed," answered Pearson, appreciatively.

"Funny!" the new Mr. Temple Barholm exclaimed even aggrievedly. "If you think this lay-out is an American joke to me, Pearson, there's where you're 'way off. Do you think it a merry jest for a fellow like me to sit up in a high chair in a dining-room like a cathedral and not know whether he ought to bite his own bread or not? And not dare to stir till things are handed to him by five husky footmen? I thought that plain-clothes man was going to cut up my meat, and slap me on the back if I choked."

Pearson's sense of humor was perhaps not inordinate, but unseemly mirth, which he had swallowed at the reference to the setting hen and

the Berlin wool antimacassar, momentarily got the better of him, despite his efforts to cough it down, and broke forth in a hoarse, ill-repressed sound.

"I beg pardon, sir," he said with a laudable endeavor to recover his professional bearing. "It's your--American way of expressing it which makes me forget myself. I beg pardon."

Tembarom laughed outright boyishly.

"Oh, cut that out," he said. "Say, how old are you?"

"Twenty-five, sir."

"So am I. If you'd met me three months ago, beating the streets of New York for a living, with holes in my shoes and a celluloid collar on, you'd have looked down on me. I know you would."

"Oh, no, sir," most falsely insisted Pearson.

"Oh, yes, you would," protested Tembarom, cheerfully. "You'd have said I talked through my nose, and I should have laughed at you for dropping your h's. Now you're rattled because I'm Mr. Temple Temple Barholm; but you're not half as rattled as I am."

"You'll get over it, sir, almost immediately," Pearson assured him,

hopefully.

"Of course I shall," said Tembarom, with much courage. "But to start right I've got to get over YOU."

"Me, sir?" Pearson breathed anxiously.

"Yes. That's what I want to get off my chest. Now, first off, you came in here to try to explain to me that, owing to my New York valet having left my New York wardrobe behind, I've not got anything to wear, and so I shall have to buy some clothes."

"I failed to find any dress-shirts, sir," began Pearson, hesitatingly.

Mr. Temple Barholm grinned.

"I always failed to find them myself. I never had a dress-shirt. I never owned a suit of glad rags in my life."

"Gl--glad rags, sir?" stammered Pearson, uncertainly.

"I knew you didn't catch on when I said that to you before dinner. I mean claw-hammer and dress-suit things. Don't you be frightened, Pearson. I never had six good shirts at once, or two pair of shoes, or more than four ten-cent handkerchiefs at a time since I was born. And when Mr. Palford yanked me away from New York, he didn't suspect a

fellow could be in such a state. And I didn't know I was in a state, anyhow. I was too busy to hunt up people to tell me, because I was rushing something important right through, and I couldn't stop. I just bought the first things I set eyes on and crammed them into my trunk. There, I guess you know the most of this, but you didn't know I knew you knew it. Now you do, and you needn't be afraid to hurt my feelings by telling me I haven't a darned thing I ought to have. You can go straight ahead."

As he leaned back, puffing away at his pipe, he had thrown a leg over the arm of his chair for greater comfort, and it really struck his valet that he had never seen a gentleman more at his ease, even one who WAS one. His casual candidness produced such a relief from the sense of strain and uncertainty that Pearson felt the color returning to his face. An opening had been given him, and it was possible for him to do his duty.

"If you wish, sir, I will make a list," he ventured further, "and the proper firms will send persons to bring things down from London on appro."

"What's 'appro' the English for?"

"Approval, sir."

"Good business! Good old Pearson!"

"Thank you, sir. Shall I attend to it to-night, to be ready for the morning post?"

"In five minutes you shall. But you threw me off the track a bit. The thing I was really going to say was more important than the clothes business."

There was something else, then, thought Pearson, some other unexpected point of view.

"What have you to do for me, anyhow?"

"Valet you, sir."

"That's English for washing my face and combing my hair and putting my socks on, ain't it?"

"Well, sir, it means doing all you require, and being always in attendance when you change."

"How much do you get for it?"

"Thirty shillings a week, sir."

"Say, Pearson," said Tembarom, with honest feeling, "I'll give you

sixty shillings a week NOT to do it."

Calmed though he had felt a few moments ago, it cannot be denied that Pearson was aghast. How could one be prepared for developments of such an order?

"Not to do it, sir!" he faltered. "But what would the servants think if you had no one to valet you?"

"That's so. What would they think?" But he evidently was not dismayed, for he smiled widely. "I guess the plainclothes man would throw a fit."

But Pearson's view was more serious and involved a knowledge of not improbable complications. He knew "the hall" and its points of view.

"I couldn't draw my wages, sir," he protested. "There'd be the greatest dissatisfaction among the other servants, sir, if I didn't do my duties. There's always a--a slight jealousy of valets and ladies'-maids. The general idea is that they do very little to earn their salaries. I've seen them fairly hated."

"Is that so? Well, I'll be darned! " remarked Mr. Temple Barholm. He gave a moment to reflection, and then cheered up immensely.

"I'll tell you how we'll fix it. You come up into my room and bring your tatting or read a newspaper while I dress." He openly chuckled.

"Holy smoke! I've GOT to put on my shirt and swear at my collar-buttons myself. If I'm in for having a trained nurse do it for me, it'll give me the Willies. When you danced around me before dinner--"

Pearson's horror forced him to commit the indiscretion of interrupting.

"I hope I didn't DANCE, sir," he implored. "I tried to be extremely quiet."

"That was it," said Tembarom. "I shouldn't have said danced; I meant crept. I kept thinking I should tread on you, and I got so nervous toward the end I thought I should just break down and sob on your bosom and beg to be taken back to home and mother."

"I'm extremely sorry, sir, I am, indeed," apologized Pearson, doing his best not to give way to hysterical giggling. How was a man to keep a decently straight face, and if one didn't, where would it end? One thing after another.

"It was not your fault. It was mine. I haven't a thing against you. You're a first-rate little chap."

"I will try to be more satisfactory to-morrow."

There must be no laughing aloud, even if one burst a blood- vessel. It

would not do. Pearson hastily confronted a vision of a young footman or Mr. Burrill himself passing through the corridors on some errand and hearing master and valet shouting together in unseemly and wholly incomprehensible mirth. And the next remark was worse than ever.

"No, you won't, Pearson," Mr. Temple Barholm asserted. "There's where you're wrong. I've got no more use for a valet than I have for a pair of straight-front corsets."

This contained a sobering suggestion.

"But you said, sir, that--"

"Oh, I'm not going to fire you," said Tembarom, genially. "I'll 'keep you on', but little Willie is going to put on his own socks. If the servants have to be pacified, you come up to my room and do anything you like. Lie on the bed if you want to; get a jew's-harp and play on it--any old thing to pass the time. And I'll raise your wages. What do you say? Is it fixed?"

"I'm here, sir, to do anything you require," Pearson answered distressedly; "but I'm afraid--"

Tembarom's face changed. A sudden thought had struck him.

"I'll tell you one thing you can do," he said; "you can valet that

friend of mine."

"Mr. Strangeways, sir?"

"Yes. I've got a notion he wouldn't mind it." He was not joking now. He was in fact rather suddenly thoughtful.

"Say, Pearson, what do you think of him?"

"Well, sir, I've not seen much of him, and he says very little, but I should think he was a GENTLEMAN, sir."

Mr. Temple Barholm seemed to think it over.

"That's queer," he said as though to himself. "That's what Ann said." Then aloud, "Would you say he was an American?"

In his unavoidable interest in a matter much talked over below stairs and productive of great curiosity Pearson was betrayed. He could not explain to himself, after he had spoken, how he could have been such a fool as to forget; but forget himself and the birthplace of the new Mr. Temple Barholm he did.

"Oh, no, sir," he exclaimed hastily; "he's QUITE the gentleman, sir, even though he is queer in his mind." The next instant he caught himself and turned cold. An American or a Frenchman or an Italian, in

fact, a native of any country on earth so slighted with an unconsciousness so natural, if he had been a man of hot temper, might have thrown something at him or kicked him out of the room; but Mr. Temple Barholm took his pipe out of his mouth and looked at him with a slow, broadening smile.

"Would you call me a gentleman, Pearson?" he asked.

Of course there was no retrieving such a blunder, Pearson felt, but--

"Certainly, sir," he stammered. "Most--most CERTAINLY, sir."

"Pearson," said Tembarom, shaking his head slowly, with a grin so good-natured that even the frankness of his words was friendly humor itself--"Pearson, you're a liar. But that doesn't jolt me a bit. I dare say I'm not one, anyhow. We might put an 'ad' in one of your papers and find out."

"I--I beg your pardon, sir," murmured Pearson in actual anguish of mind.

Mr. Temple Barholm laughed outright.

"Oh, I've not got it in for you. How could you help it?" he said. Then he stopped joking again. "If you want to please ME," he added with deliberation, "you look after Mr. Strangeways, and don't let anything

disturb him. Don't bother him, but just find out what he wants. When he gets restless, come and tell me. If I'm out, tell him I'm coming back. Don't let him worry. You understand--don't let him worry."

"I'll do my best--my very best, sir," Pearson answered devoutly. "I've been nervous and excited this first day because I am so anxious to please--everything seems to depend on it just now," he added, daring another confidential outburst. "But you'll see I do know how to keep my wits about me in general, and I've got a good memory, and I have learned my duties, sir. I'll attend to Mr. Strangeways most particular."

As Tembarom listened, and watched his neat, blond countenance, and noted the undertone of quite desperate appeal in his low voice, he was thinking of a number of things. Chiefly he was thinking of little Ann Hutchinson and the Harlem flat which might have been "run" on fifteen dollars a week.

"I want to know I have some one in this museum of a place who'll UNDERSTAND," he said--"some one who'll do just exactly what I say and ask no fool questions and keep his mouth shut. I believe you could do it."

"I'll swear I could, sir. Trust me," was Pearson's astonishingly emotional and hasty answer.

"I'm going to," returned Mr. Temple Barholm. "I've set my mind on putting something through in my own way. It's a queer thing, and most people would say I was a fool for trying it. Mr. Hutchinson does, but Miss Hutchinson doesn't."

There was a note in his tone of saying "Miss Hutchinson doesn't" which opened up vistas to Pearson--strange vistas when one thought of old Mrs. Hutchinson's cottage and the estate of Temple Barholm.

"We're just about the same age," his employer continued, "and in a sort of way we're in just about the same fix."

Their eyes looked into each other's a second; but it was not for Pearson to presume to make any comment whatsoever upon the possible nature of "the fix." Two or three more puffs, and Mr. Temple Barholm spoke again.

"Say, Pearson, I don't want to butt in, but what about that little bunch of calico of yours--the one you're saving up for?"

"Calico, sir?" said Pearson, at sea, but hopeful. Whatsoever the new Mr. Temple Barholm meant, one began to realize that it was not likely to be unfriendly.

"That's American for HER, Pearson. 'Her' stands for the same thing both in English and American, I guess. What's her name and where is

she? Don't you say a word if you don't want to."

Pearson drew a step nearer. There was an extraordinary human atmosphere in the room which caused things to begin to go on in his breast. He had had a harder life than Tembarom because he had been more timid and less buoyant and less unselfconscious. He had been beaten by a drunken mother and kicked by a drunken father. He had gone hungry and faint to the board school and had been punished as a dull boy. After he had struggled into a place as page, he had been bullied by footmen and had had his ears boxed by cooks and butlers. Ladies'-maids and smart housemaids had sneered at him, and made him feel himself a hopeless, vulgar little worm who never would "get on." But he had got on, in a measure, because he had worked like a slave and openly resented nothing. A place like this had been his fevered hope and dream from his page days, though of course his imagination had not encompassed attendance on a gentleman who had never owned a dress-shirt in his life. Yet gentleman or no gentleman, he was a Temple Barholm, and there was something about him, something human in his young voice and grin and queer, unheard-of New York jokes, which Pearson had never encountered, and which had the effect of making him feel somehow more of a man than his timorous nature had ever allowed of his feeling before. It suggested that they were both, valet and master, merely masculine human creatures of like kind. The way he had said "Miss Hutchinson" and the twinkle in his eye when he'd made that American joke about the "little bunch of calico"! The curious fact was that thin, neat, white-blooded-looking Pearson was passionately in

love. So he took the step nearer and grew hot and spoke low.

"Her name is Rose Merrick, sir, and she's in place in London. She's lady's-maid to a lady of title, and it isn't an easy place. Her lady has a high temper, and she's economical with her servants. Her maid has to sew early and late, and turn out as much as if she was a whole dressmaking establishment. She's clever with her needle, and it would be easier if she felt it was appreciated. But she's treated haughty and severe, though she tries her very best. She has to wait up half the night after balls, and I'm afraid it's breaking her spirit and her health. That's why,--I beg your pardon, sir," he added, his voice shaking--"that's why I'd bear anything on earth if I could give her a little home of her own."

"Gee whizz!" ejaculated Mr. Temple Barholm, with feeling. "I guess you would!"

"And that's not all, sir," said Pearson. "She's a beautiful girl, sir, with a figure, and service is sometimes not easy for a young woman like that. His lordship--the master of the house, sir,--is much too attentive. He's a man with bad habits; the last lady's-maid was sent away in disgrace. Her ladyship wouldn't believe she hadn't been forward when she saw things she didn't like, though every one in the hall knew the girl hated his bold ways with her, and her mother nearly broke her heart. He's begun with Rose, and it just drives me mad, sir, it does!"

He choked, and wiped his forehead with his clean handkerchief. It was damp, and his young eyes had fire in them, as Mr. Temple Barholm did not fail to observe.

"I'm taking a liberty talking to you like this, sir," he said. "I'm behaving as if I didn't know my place, sir."

"Your place is behind that fellow, kicking him till he'll never sit down again except on eider-down cushions three deep," remarked Mr. Temple Barholm, with fire in his eyes also. "That's where your place is. It's where mine would be if I was in the same house with him and caught him making a goat of himself. I bet nine Englishmen out of ten would break his darned neck for him if they got on to his little ways, even if they were lordships themselves."

"The decent ones won't know," Pearson said. "That's not what happens, sir. He can laugh and chaff it off with her ladyship and coax her round. But a girl that's discharged like that, Rose says, that's the worst of it: she says she's got a character fastened on to her for life that no respectable man ought to marry her with."

Mr. Temple Barholm removed his leg from the arm of his chair and got up. Long-legged, sinewy, but somewhat slouchy in his badly made tweed suit, sharp New York face and awful American style notwithstanding, he still looked rather nice as he laid his hand on his valet's shoulder

and gave him a friendly push.

"See here," he said. "What you've got to say to Rose is that she's just got to cut that sort of thing out--cut it right out. Talking to a man that's in love with her as if he was likely to throw her down because lies were told. Tell her to forget it --forget it quick. Why, what does she suppose a man's FOR, by jinks? What's he FOR?"

"I've told her that, sir, though of course not in American. I just swore it on my knees in Hyde Park one night when she got out for an hour. But she laid her poor head on the back of the bench and cried and wouldn't listen. She says she cares for me too much to--"

Tembarom's hand clutched his shoulder. His face lighted and glowed suddenly.

"Care for you too much," he asked. "Did she say that? God bless her!"

"That's what I said," broke in Pearson.

"I heard another girl say that--just before I left New York--a girl that's just a wonder," said his master. "A girl can be a wonder, can't she?"

"Rose is, sir," protested Pearson. "She is, indeed, sir. And her eyes are that blue--"

"Blue, are they? " interrupted Tembarom. "I know the kind. I'm on to the whole thing. And what's more, I'm going to fix it. You tell Rose--and tell her from me--that she's going to leave that place, and you're going to stay in this one, and--well, presently things'll begin to happen. They're going to be all right--ALL RIGHT," he went on, with immensely convincing emphasis. "She's going to have that little home of her own." He paused a moment for reflection, and then a sudden thought presented itself to him. "Why, darn it!" he exclaimed, "there must be a whole raft of little homes that belong to me in one place or another. Why couldn't I fix you both up in one of them?"

"Oh, sir!" Pearson broke forth in some slight alarm. He went so fast and so far all in a moment. And Pearson really possessed a neat, well-ordered conscience, and, moreover, "knew his place." "I hope I didn't seem to be expecting you to trouble yourself about me, sir. I mustn't presume on your kindness."

"It's not kindness; it's--well, it's just human. I'm going to think this thing over. You just keep your hair on, and let me do my own valeting, and you'll see I'll fix it for you somehow."

What he thought of doing, how he thought of doing it, and what Pearson was to expect, the agitated young man did not know. The situation was of course abnormal, judged by all respectable, long-established custom. A man's valet and his valet's "young woman" were not usually

of intimate interest. Gentlemen were sometimes "kind" to you--gave you half a sovereign or even a sovereign, and perhaps asked after your mother if you were supporting one; but--

"I never dreamed of going so far, sir," he said. "I forgot myself, I'm afraid."

"Good thing you did. It's made me feel as if we were brothers." He laughed again, enjoying the thought of the little thing who cared for Pearson "too much" and had eyes that were "that blue." "Say, I've just thought of something else. Have you bought her an engagement-ring yet?"

"No, sir. In our class of life jewelry is beyond the means."

"I just wondered," Mr. Temple Barholm said. He seemed to be thinking of something that pleased him as he fumbled for his pocket-book and took a clean banknote out of it. "I'm not on to what the value of this thing is in real money, but you go and buy her a ring with it, and I bet she'll be so pleased you'll have the time of your life."

Pearson taking it; and recognizing its value in UNreal money, was embarrassed by feeling the necessity of explanation.

"This is a five-pound note, sir. It's too much, sir, it is indeed. This would FURNISH THE FRONT PARLOR." He said it almost solemnly.

Mr. Temple Barholm looked at the note interestedly.

"Would it? By jinks!" and his laugh had a certain softness of recollection. "I guess that's just what Ann would say. She'd know what it would furnish, you bet your life!"

"I'm most grateful, sir," protested Pearson, "but I oughtn't to take it. Being an American gentleman and not accustomed to English money, you don't realize that--"

"I'm not accustomed to any kind of money," said his master. "I'm scared to be left alone in the room with it. That's what's the matter. If I don't give some away, I shall never know I've got it. Cheer up, Pearson. You take that and buy the ring, and when you start furnishing, I'll see you don't get left."

"I don't know what to say, sir," Pearson faltered emotionally. "I don't, indeed."

"Don't say a darned thing," replied Mr. Temple Barholm. And just here his face changed as Mr. Palford had seen it change before, and as Pearson often saw it change later. His New York jocular irreverence dropped from him, and he looked mature and oddly serious.

"I've tried to sort of put you wise to the way I've lived and the

things I HAVEN'T had ever since I was born," he said, "but I guess you don't really know a thing about it. I've got more money coming in every year than a thousand of me would ever expect to see in their lives, according to my calculation. And I don't know how to do any of the things a fellow who is what you call `a gentleman' would know how to do. I mean in the way of spending it. Now, I've got to get some fun out of it. I should be a mutt if I didn't, so I'm going to spend it my own way. I may make about seventy-five different kinds of a fool of myself, but I guess I sha'n't do any particular harm."

"You'll do good, sir,--to every one."

"Shall I?--said Tembarom, speculatively. "Well, I'm not exactly setting out with that in my mind. I'm no Young Men's Christian Association, but I'm not in for doing harm, anyway. You take your five-pound note--come to think of it, Palford said it came to about twenty- five dollars, real money. Hully gee! I never thought I'd have twenty-five dollars to GIVE AWAY! It makes me feel like I was Morgan."

"Thank you, sir; thank you," said Pearson, putting the note into his pocket with rapt gratitude in his neat face. "You --you do not wish me to remain--to do anything for you?"

"Not a thing. But just go and find out if Mr. Strangeways is asleep. If he isn't and seems restless, I'll come and have a talk with him."

"Yes, sir," said Pearson, and went at once.