

CHAPTER XXIII

INTRODUCING G. SELDEN

A bird was perched upon a swaying branch of a slim young sapling near the fence-supported hedge which bounded the park, and Mount Dunstan had

stopped to look at it and listen. A soft shower had fallen, and after its passing, the sun coming through the light clouds, there had broken forth again in the trees brief trills and calls and fluting of bird notes. The sward and ferns glittered fresh green under the raindrops; the young leaves on trees and hedge seemed visibly to uncurl, the uncovered earth looked richly dark and moist, and sent forth the fragrance from its deeps, which, rising to a man's nostrils, stirs and thrills him because it is the scent of life's self. The bird upon the sapling was a robin, the tiny round body perched upon his delicate legs, plump and bright plumaged for mating. He touched his warm red breast with his beak, fluffed out and shook his feathers, and, swelling his throat, poured forth his small, entranced song. It was a gay, brief, jaunty thing, but pure, joyous, gallant, liquid melody. There was dainty bravado in it, saucy demand and allurements. It was addressed to some invisible hearer of the tender sex, and wheresoever she might be hidden--whether in great branch or low thicket or hedge--there was hinted no doubt in her small wooer's note that she would hear it and in due time respond. Mount Dunstan, listening, even laughed at its confident music. The tiny thing uttering its Call of the World--jubilant

in the surety of answer!

Having flung it forth, he paused a moment and waited, his small head turned sideways, his big, round, dew-bright black eye roguishly attentive. Then with more swelling of the throat he trilled and rippled gayly anew, undisturbed and undoubting, but with a trifle of insistence. Then he listened, tried again two or three times, with brave chirps and exultant little roulades. "Here am I, the bright-breasted, the liquid-eyed, the slender-legged, the joyous and conquering! Listen to me--listen to me. Listen and answer in the call of God's world." It was the joy and triumphant faith in the tiny note of the tiny thing--Life as he himself was, though Life whose mystery his man's hand could have crushed--which, while he laughed, set Mount Dunstan thinking. Spring warmth and spring scents and spring notes set a man's being in tune with infinite things.

The bright roulade began again, prolonged itself with renewed effort, rose to its height, and ended. From a bush in the thicket farther up the road a liquid answer came. And Mount Dunstan's laugh at the sound of it was echoed by another which came apparently from the bank rising from the road on the other side of the hedge, and accompanying the laugh was a good-natured nasal voice.

"She's caught on. There's no mistake about that. I guess it's time for you to hustle, Mr. Rob."

Mount Dunstan laughed again. Jem Salter had heard voices like it, and cheerful slang phrases of the same order in his ranch days. On the other side of his park fence there was evidently sitting, through some odd chance, an American of the cheery, casual order, not sufficiently polished by travel to have lost his picturesque national characteristics.

Mount Dunstan put a hand on a broken panel of fence and leaped over into the road.

A bicycle was lying upon the roadside grass, and on the bank, looking as though he had been sheltering himself under the hedge from the rain, sat a young man in a cheap bicycling suit. His features were sharply cut and keen, his cap was pushed back from his forehead, and he had a pair of shrewdly careless boyish eyes.

Mount Dunstan liked the look of him, and seeing his natural start at the unheralded leap over the gap, which was quite close to him, he spoke.

"Good-morning," he said. "I am afraid I startled you."

"Good-morning," was the response. "It was a bit of a jolt seeing you jump almost over my shoulder. Where did you come from? You must have been just behind me."

"I was," explained Mount Dunstan. "Standing in the park listening to the

robin."

The young fellow laughed outright.

"Say," he said, "that was pretty fine, wasn't it? Wasn't he getting it off his chest! He was an English robin, I guess. American robins are three or four times as big. I liked that little chap. He was a winner."

"You are an American?"

"Sure," nodding. "Good old Stars and Stripes for mine. First time I've been here. Came part for business and part for pleasure. Having the time of my life."

Mount Dunstan sat down beside him. He wanted to hear him talk. He had liked to hear the ranchmen talk. This one was of the city type, but his genial conversational wanderings would be full of quaint slang and good spirits. He was quite ready to converse, as was made manifest by his next speech.

"I'm biking through the country because I once had an old grandmother that was English, and she was always talking about English country, and how green things was, and how there was hedges instead of rail fences. She thought there was nothing like little old England. Well, as far as roads and hedges go, I'm with her. They're all right. I wanted a fellow I met crossing, to come with me, but he took a Cook's trip to Paris.

He's a gay sort of boy. Said he didn't want any green lanes in his. He wanted Boolyvard." He laughed again and pushed his cap farther back on his forehead. "Said I wasn't much of a sport. I tell YOU, a chap that's got to earn his fifteen per, and live on it, can't be TOO much of a sport."

"Fifteen per?" Mount Dunstan repeated doubtfully.

His companion chuckled.

"I forgot I was talking to an Englishman. Fifteen dollars per week--that's what 'fifteen per' means. That's what he told me he gets at Lobenstien's brewery in New York. Fifteen per. Not much, is it?"

"How does he manage Continental travel on fifteen per?" Mount Dunstan inquired.

"He's a typewriter and stenographer, and he dug up some extra jobs to do at night. He's been working and saving two years to do this. We didn't come over on one of the big liners with the Four Hundred, you can bet. Took a cheap one, inside cabin, second class."

"By George!" said Mount Dunstan. "That was American."

The American eagle slightly flapped his wings. The young man pushed his cap a trifle sideways this time, and flushed a little.

"Well, when an American wants anything he generally reaches out for it."

"Wasn't it rather--rash, considering the fifteen per?" Mount Dunstan suggested. He was really beginning to enjoy himself.

"What's the use of making a dollar and sitting on it. I've not got fifteen per--steady--and here I am."

Mount Dunstan knew his man, and looked at him with inquiring interest. He was quite sure he would go on. This was a thing he had seen before--an utter freedom from the insular grudging reserve, a sort of occult perception of the presence of friendly sympathy, and an ingenuous readiness to meet it half way. The youngster, having missed his fellow-traveler, and probably feeling the lack of companionship in his country rides, was in the mood for self-revelation.

"I'm selling for a big concern," he said, "and I've got a first-class article to carry. Up to date, you know, and all that. It's the top notch of typewriting machines, the Delkoff. Ever seen it? Here's my card," taking a card from an inside pocket and handing it to him. It was inscribed:

J. BURRIDGE & SON,

DELKOFF TYPEWRITER CO.

BROADWAY, NEW YORK. G. SELDEN.

"That's my name," he said, pointing to the inscription in the corner.

"I'm G. Selden, the junior assistant of Mr. Jones."

At the sight of the insignia of his trade, his holiday air dropped from him, and he hastily drew from another pocket an illustrated catalogue.

"If you use a typewriter," he broke forth, "I can assure you it would be to your interest to look at this." And as Mount Dunstan took the proffered pamphlet, and with amiable gravity opened it, he rapidly poured forth his salesman's patter, scarcely pausing to take his breath:

"It's the most up-to-date machine on the market. It has all the latest improved mechanical appliances. You will see from the cut in the catalogue that the platen roller is easily removed without a long mechanical operation. All you do is to slip two pins back and off comes the roller. There is also another point worth mentioning--the ribbon switch. By using this ribbon switch you can write in either red or blue ink while you are using only one ribbon. By throwing the switch on this side, you can use thirteen yards on the upper edge of the ribbon, by reversing it, you use thirteen yards on the lower edge--thus getting practically twenty-six yards of good, serviceable ribbon out of one that is only thirteen yards long--making a saving of fifty per cent. in your ribbon expenditure alone, which you will see is quite an item to any

enterprising firm."

He was obliged to pause here for a second or so, but as Mount Dunstan exhibited no signs of intending to use violence, and, on the contrary, continued to inspect the catalogue, he broke forth with renewed cheery volubility:

"Another advantage is the new basket shift. Also, the carriage on this machine is perfectly stationary and rigid. On all other machines it is fastened by a series of connecting bolts and links, which you will readily understand makes perfect alignment uncertain. Then our tabulator is a part and parcel of the instrument, costing you nothing more than the original price of the machine, which is one hundred dollars--without discount."

"It seems a good thing," said Mount Dunstan. "If I had much business to transact, I should buy one."

"If you bought one you'd HAVE business," responded Selden. "That's what's the matter. It's the up-to-date machines that set things humming. A slow, old-fashioned typewriter uses a firm's time, and time's money."

"I don't find it so," said Mount Dunstan. "I have more time than I can possibly use--and no money."

G. Selden looked at him with friendly interest. His experience,

which was varied, had taught him to recognize symptoms. This nice, rough-looking chap, who, despite his rather shabby clothes, looked like a gentleman, wore an expression Jones's junior assistant had seen many a time before. He had seen it frequently on the countenances of other junior assistants who had tramped the streets and met more or less savage rebuffs through a day's length, without disposing of a single Delkoff, and thereby adding five dollars to the ten per. It was the kind of thing which wiped the youth out of a man's face and gave him a hard, worn look about the eyes. He had looked like that himself many an unfeeling day before he had learned to "know the ropes and not mind a bit of hot air." His buoyant, slangy soul was a friendly thing. He was a gregarious creature, and liked his fellow man. He felt, indeed, more at ease with him when he needed "jollyng along." Reticence was not even etiquette in a case as usual as this.

"Say," he broke out, "perhaps I oughtn't to have worried you. Are you up against it? Down on your luck, I mean," in hasty translation.

Mount Dunstan grinned a little.

"That's a very good way of putting it," he answered. "I never heard 'up against it' before. It's good. Yes, I'm up against it.

"Out of a job?" with genial sympathy.

"Well, the job I had was too big for me. It needed capital." He grinned

slightly again, recalling a phrase of his Western past. "I'm afraid I'm down and out."

"No, you're not," with cheerful scorn. "You're not dead, are you? S'long as a man's not been dead a month, there's always a chance that there's luck round the corner. How did you happen here? Are you piking it?"

Momentarily Mount Dunstan was baffled. G. Selden, recognising the fact, enlightened him. "That's New York again," he said, with a boyish touch of apology. "It means on the tramp. Travelling along the turnpike. You don't look as if you had come to that--though it's queer the sort of fellows you do meet piking sometimes. Theatrical companies that have gone to pieces on the road, you know. Perhaps--" with a sudden thought, "you're an actor. Are you?"

Mount Dunstan admitted to himself that he liked the junior assistant of Jones immensely. A more ingenuously common young man, a more innocent outsider, it had never been his blessed privilege to enter into close converse with, but his very commonness was a healthy, normal thing. It made no effort to wreath itself with chaplets of elegance; it was beautifully unaware that such adornment was necessary. It enjoyed itself, youthfully; attacked the earning of its bread with genial pluck, and its good-natured humanness had touched him. He had enjoyed his talk; he wanted to hear more of it. He was not in the mood to let him go his way. To Penzance, who was to lunch with him to-day, he would present a

study of absorbing interest.

"No," he answered. "I'm not an actor. My name is Mount Dunstan, and this place," with a nod over his shoulder, "is mine--but I'm up against it, nevertheless."

Selden looked a trifle disgusted. He began to pick up his bicycle. He had given a degree of natural sympathy, and this was an English chap's idea of a joke.

"I'm the Prince of Wales, myself," he remarked, "and my mother's expecting me to lunch at Windsor. So long, me lord," and he set his foot on the treadle.

Mount Dunstan rose, feeling rather awkward. The point seemed somewhat difficult to contend.

"It is not a joke," he said, conscious that he spoke rather stiffly.

"Little Willie's not quite as easy as he looks," was the cryptic remark of Mr. Selden.

Mount Dunstan lost his rather easily lost temper, which happened to be the best thing he could have done under the circumstances.

"Damn it," he burst out. "I'm not such a fool as I evidently look. A

nice ass I should be to play an idiot joke like that. I'm speaking the truth. Go if you like--and be hanged."

Selden's attention was arrested. The fellow was in earnest. The place was his. He must be the earl chap he had heard spoken of at the wayside public house he had stopped at for a pot of beer. He dismounted from his bicycle, and came back, pushing it before him, good-natured relenting and awkwardness combining in his look.

"All right," he said. "I apologise--if it's cold fact. I'm not calling you a liar."

"Thank you," still a little stiffly, from Mount Dunstan.

The unabashed good cheer of G. Selden carried him lightly over a slightly difficult moment. He laughed, pushing his cap back, of course, and looking over the hedge at the sweep of park, with a group of deer cropping softly in the foreground.

"I guess I should get a bit hot myself," he volunteered handsomely, "if I was an earl, and owned a place like this, and a fool fellow came along and took me for a tramp. That was a pretty bad break, wasn't it? But I did say you didn't look like it. Anyway you needn't mind me. I shouldn't get onto Pierpont Morgan or W. K. Vanderbilt, if I met 'em in the street."

He spoke the two names as an Englishman of his class would have spoken of the Dukes of Westminster or Marlborough. These were his nobles--the heads of the great American houses, and entirely parallel, in his mind, with the heads of any great house in England. They wielded the power of the world, and could wield it for evil or good, as any prince or duke might. Mount Dunstan saw the parallel.

"I apologise, all right," G. Selden ended genially.

"I am not offended," Mount Dunstan answered. "There was no reason why you should know me from another man. I was taken for a gamekeeper a few weeks since. I was savage a moment, because you refused to believe me--and why should you believe me after all?"

G. Selden hesitated. He liked the fellow anyhow.

"You said you were up against it--that was it. And--and I've seen chaps down on their luck often enough. Good Lord, the hard-luck stories I hear every day of my life. And they get a sort of look about the eyes and mouth. I hate to see it on any fellow. It makes me sort of sick to come across it even in a chap that's only got his fool self to blame. I may be making another break, telling you--but you looked sort of that way."

"Perhaps," stolidly, "I did." Then, his voice warming,

"It was jolly good-natured of you to think about it at all. Thank you."

"That's all right," in polite acknowledgment. Then with another look over the hedge, "Say--what ought I to call you? Earl, or my Lord?"

"It's not necessary for you to call me anything in particular--as a rule. If you were speaking of me, you might say Lord Mount Dunstan."

G. Selden looked relieved.

"I don't want to be too much off," he said. "And I'd like to ask you a favour. I've only three weeks here, and I don't want to miss any chances."

"What chance would you like?"

"One of the things I'm biking over the country for, is to get a look at just such a place as this. We haven't got 'em in America. My old grandmother was always talking about them. Before her mother brought her to New York she'd lived in a village near some park gates, and she chinned about it till she died. When I was a little chap I liked to hear her. She wasn't much of an American. Wore a black net cap with purple ribbons in it, and hadn't outlived her respect for aristocracy. Gee!" chuckling, "if she'd heard what I said to you just now, I reckon she'd have thrown a fit. Anyhow she made me feel I'd like to see the kind of places she talked about. And I shall think myself in luck if you'll let me have a look at yours--just a bike around the park, if you don't

object--or I'll leave the bike outside, if you'd rather."

"I don't object at all," said Mount Dunstan. "The fact is, I happened to be on the point of asking you to come and have some lunch--when you got on your bicycle."

Selden pushed his cap and cleared his throat.

"I wasn't expecting that," he said. "I'm pretty dusty," with a glance at his clothes. "I need a wash and brush up--particularly if there are ladies."

There were no ladies, and he could be made comfortable. This being explained to him, he was obviously rejoiced. With unembarrassed frankness, he expressed exultation. Such luck had not, at any time, presented itself to him as a possibility in his holiday scheme.

"By gee," he ejaculated, as they walked under the broad oaks of the avenue leading to the house. "Speaking of luck, this is the limit! I can't help thinking of what my grandmother would say if she saw me."

He was a new order of companion, but before they had reached the house, Mount Dunstan had begun to find him inspiring to the spirits.

His jovial, if crude youth, his unaffected acknowledgment of unaccustomedness to grandeur, even when in dilapidation, his delight in the novelty of the particular forms of everything about him--trees and

sward, ferns and moss, his open self-congratulation, were without doubt cheerful things.

His exclamation, when they came within sight of the house itself, was for a moment disturbing to Mount Dunstan's composure.

"Hully gee!" he said. "The old lady was right. All I've thought about 'em was 'way off. It's bigger than a museum." His approval was immense.

During the absence in which he was supplied with the "wash and brush up," Mount Dunstan found Mr. Penzance in the library. He explained to him what he had encountered, and how it had attracted him.

"You have liked to hear me describe my Western neighbours," he said.

"This youngster is a New York development, and of a different type.

But there is a likeness. I have invited to lunch with us, a young man whom--Tenham, for instance, if he were here--would call 'a bounder.'

He is nothing of the sort. In his junior-assistant-salesman way, he is rather a fine thing. I never saw anything more decently human than his way of asking me--man to man, making friends by the roadside if I was 'up against it.' No other fellow I have known has ever exhibited the same healthy sympathy."

The Reverend Lewis was entranced. Already he was really quite flushed with interest. As Assyrian character, engraved upon sarcophogi, would have allured and thrilled him, so was he allured by the cryptic nature

of the two or three American slang phrases Mount Dunstan had repeated to him. His was the student's simple ardour.

"Up against it," he echoed. "Really! Dear! Dear! And that signifies, you say----"

"Apparently it means that a man has come face to face with an obstacle difficult or impossible to overcome."

"But, upon my word, that is not bad. It is strong figure of speech. It brings up a picture. A man hurrying to an end--much desired--comes unexpectedly upon a stone wall. One can almost hear the impact. He is up against it. Most vivid. Excellent! Excellent!"

The nature of Selden's calling was such that he was not accustomed to being received with a hint of enthusiastic welcome. There was something almost akin to this in the vicar's courteously amiable, aquiline countenance when he rose to shake hands with the young man on his entrance. Mr. Penzance was indeed slightly disappointed that his greeting was not responded to by some characteristic phrasing. His American was that of Sam Slick and Artemus Ward, Punch and various English witticisms in anecdote. Life at the vicarage of Dunstan had not revealed to him that the model had become archaic.

The revelation dawned upon him during his intercourse with G. Selden. The young man in his cheap bicycling suit was a new development. He was

markedly unlike an English youth of his class, as he was neither shy, nor laboriously at his ease. That he was at his ease to quite an amazing degree might perhaps have been remotely resented by the insular mind, accustomed to another order of bearing in its social inferiors, had it not been so obviously founded on entire unconsciousness of self, and so mingled with open appreciation of the unanticipated pleasures of the occasion. Nothing could have been farther from G. Selden than any desire to attempt to convey the impression that he had enjoyed the hospitality of persons of rank on previous occasions. He found indeed a gleeful point in the joke of the incongruousness of his own presence amid such surroundings.

"What Little Willie was expecting," he remarked once, to the keen joy of Mr. Penzance, "was a hunk of bread and cheese at a village saloon somewhere. I ought to have said 'pub,' oughtn't I? You don't call them saloons here."

He was encouraged to talk, and in his care-free fluency he opened up many vistas to the interested Mr. Penzance, who found himself, so to speak, whirled along Broadway, rushed up the steps of the elevated railroad and struggling to obtain a seat, or a strap to hang to on a Sixth Avenue train. The man was saturated with the atmosphere of the hot battle he lived in. From his childhood he had known nothing but the fever heat of his "little old New York," as he called it with affectionate slanginess, and any temperature lower than that he was accustomed to would have struck him as being below normal. Penzance was

impressed by his feeling of affection for the amazing city of his birth. He admired, he adored it, he boasted joyously of its perfervid charm.

"Something doing," he said. "That's what my sort of a fellow likes--something doing. You feel it right there when you walk along the streets. Little old New York for mine. It's good enough for Little Willie. And it never stops. Why, Broadway at night----"

He forgot his chop, and leaned forward on the table to pour forth his description. The manservant, standing behind Mount Dunstan's chair, forgot himself also, thought he was a trained domestic whose duty it was to present dishes to the attention without any apparent mental processes. Certainly it was not his business to listen, and gaze fascinated. This he did, however, actually for the time unconscious of his breach of manners. The very crudity of the language used, the oddly sounding, sometimes not easily translatable slang phrases, used as if they were a necessary part of any conversation--the blunt, uneducated bareness of figure--seemed to Penzance to make more roughly vivid the picture dashed off. The broad thoroughfare almost as thronged by night as by day. Crowds going to theatres, loaded electric cars, whizzing and clanging bells, the elevated railroad rushing and roaring past within hearing, theatre fronts flaming with electric light, announcements of names of theatrical stars and the plays they appeared in, electric light advertisements of brands of cigars, whiskies, breakfast foods, all blazing high in the night air in such number and with such strength of brilliancy that the whole thoroughfare was as bright with light as a

ballroom or a theatre. The vicar felt himself standing in the midst of it all, blinded by the glare.

"Sit down on the sidewalk and read your newspaper, a book, a magazine--any old thing you like," with an exultant laugh.

The names of the dramatic stars blazing over entrances to the theatres were often English names, their plays English plays, their companies made up of English men and women. G. Selden was as familiar with them and commented upon their gifts as easily as if he had drawn his drama from the Strand instead of from Broadway. The novels piled up in the stations of what he called "the L" (which revealed itself as being a New-York-haste abbreviation of Elevated railroad), were in large proportion English novels, and he had his ingenuous estimate of English novelists, as well as of all else.

"Ruddy, now," he said; "I like him. He's all right, even though we haven't quite caught onto India yet."

The dazzle and brilliancy of Broadway so surrounded Penzance that he found it necessary to withdraw himself and return to his immediate surroundings, that he might recover from his sense of interested bewilderment. His eyes fell upon the stern lineaments of a Mount Dunstan in a costume of the time of Henry VIII. He was a burly gentleman, whose ruff-shortened thick neck and haughty fixedness of stare from the background of his portrait were such as seemed to eliminate him from the

scheme of things, the clanging of electric cars, and the prevailing roar of the L. Confronted by his gaze, electric light advertisements of whiskies, cigars, and corsets seemed impossible.

"He's all right," continued G. Selden. "I'm ready to separate myself from one fifty any time I see a new book of his. He's got the goods with him."

The richness of colloquialism moved the vicar of Mount Dunstan to deep enjoyment.

"Would you mind--I trust you won't," he apologised courteously, "telling me exactly the significance of those two last sentences. In think I see their meaning, but----"

G. Selden looked good-naturedly apologetic himself.

"Well, it's slang--you see," he explained. "I guess I can't help it. You--" flushing a trifle, but without any touch of resentment in the boyish colour, "you know what sort of a chap I am. I'm not passing myself off as anything but an ordinary business hustler, am I--just under salesman to a typewriter concern? I shouldn't like to think I'd got in here on any bluff. I guess I sling in slang every half dozen words----."

"My dear boy," Penzance was absolutely moved and he spoke with

warmth quite paternal, "Lord Mount Dunstan and I are genuinely interested--genuinely. He, because he knows New York a little, and I because I don't. I am an elderly man, and have spent my life buried in my books in drowsy villages. Pray go on. Your American slang has frequently a delightful meaning--a fantastic hilarity, or common sense, or philosophy, hidden in its origin. In that it generally differs from English slang, which--I regret to say--is usually founded on some silly catch word. Pray go on. When you see a new book by Mr. Kipling, you are ready to 'separate yourself from one fifty' because he 'has the goods with him.'"

G. Selden suppressed an involuntary young laugh.

"One dollar and fifty cents is usually the price of a book," he said.

"You separate yourself from it when you take it out of your clothes--I mean out of your pocket--and pay it over the counter."

"There's a careless humour in it," said Mount Dunstan grimly. "The suggestion of parting is not half bad. On the whole, it is subtle."

"A great deal of it is subtle," said Penzance, "though it all professes to be obvious. The other sentence has a commercial sound."

"When a man goes about selling for a concern," said the junior assistant of Jones, "he can prove what he says, if he has the goods with him. I guess it came from that. I don't know. I only know that when a man is a

straight sort of fellow, and can show up, we say he's got the goods with him."

They sat after lunch in the library, before an open window, looking into a lovely sunken garden. Blossoms were breaking out on every side, and robins, thrushes, and blackbirds chirped and trilled and whistled, as Mount Dunstan and Penzance led G. Selden on to paint further pictures for them.

Some of them were rather painful, Penzance thought. As connected with youth, they held a touch of pathos Selden was all unconscious of. He had had a hard life, made up, since his tenth year, of struggles to earn his living. He had sold newspapers, he had run errands, he had swept out a "candy store." He had had a few years at the public school, and a few months at a business college, to which he went at night, after work hours. He had been "up against it good and plenty," he told them. He seemed, however, to have had a knack of making friends and of giving them "a boost along" when such a chance was possible. Both of his listeners realised that a good many people had liked him, and the reason was apparent enough to them.

"When a chap gets sorry for himself," he remarked once, "he's down and out. That's a stone-cold fact. There's lots of hard-luck stories that you've got to hear anyhow. The fellow that can keep his to himself is the fellow that's likely to get there."

"Get there?" the vicar murmured reflectively, and Selden chuckled again.

"Get where he started out to go to--the White House, if you like. The fellows that have got there kept their hardluck stories quiet, I bet. Guess most of 'em had plenty during election, if they were the kind to lie awake sobbing on their pillows because their feelings were hurt."

He had never been sorry for himself, it was evident, though it must be admitted that there were moments when the elderly English clergyman, whose most serious encounters had been annoying interviews with cottagers of disrespectful manner, rather shuddered as he heard his simple recital of days when he had tramped street after street, carrying his catalogue with him, and trying to tell his story of the Delkoff to frantically busy men who were driven mad by the importunate sight of him, to worried, ill-tempered ones who broke into fury when they heard his voice, and to savage brutes who were only restrained by law from kicking him into the street.

"You've got to take it, if you don't want to lose your job. Some of them's as tired as you are. Sometimes, if you can give 'em a jolly and make 'em laugh, they'll listen, and you may unload a machine. But it's no merry jest just at first--particularly in bad weather. The first five weeks I was with the Delkoff I never made a sale. Had to live on my ten per, and that's pretty hard in New York. Three and a half for your hall bedroom, and the rest for your hash and shoes. But I held on, and gradually luck began to turn, and I began not to care so much when a man

gave it to me hot."

The vicar of Mount Dunstan had never heard of the "hall bedroom" as an institution. A dozen unconscious sentences placed it before his mental vision. He thought it horribly touching. A narrow room at the back of a cheap lodging house, a bed, a strip of carpet, a washstand--this the sole refuge of a male human creature, in the flood tide of youth, no more than this to come back to nightly, footsore and resentful of soul, after a day's tramp spent in forcing himself and his wares on people who did not want him or them, and who found infinite variety in the forcefulness of their method of saying so.

"What you know, when you go into a place, is that nobody wants to see you, and no one will let you talk if they can help it. The only thing is to get in and rattle off your stunt before you can be fired out."

Sometimes at first he had gone back at night to the hall bedroom, and sat on the edge of the narrow bed, swinging his feet, and asking himself how long he could hold out. But he had held out, and evidently developed into a good salesman, being bold and of imperturbable good spirits and temper, and not troubled by hypersensitiveness. Hearing of the "hall bedroom," the coldness of it in winter, and the breathless heat in summer, the utter loneliness of it at all times and seasons, one could not have felt surprise if the grown-up lad doomed to its narrowness as home had been drawn into the electric-lighted gaiety of Broadway, and being caught in its maelstrom, had been sucked under to its lowest

depths. But it was to be observed that G. Selden had a clear eye, and a healthy skin, and a healthy young laugh yet, which were all wonderfully to his credit, and added enormously to one's liking for him.

"Do you use a typewriter?" he said at last to Mr. Penzance. "It would cut out half your work with your sermons. If you do use one, I'd just like to call your attention to the Delkoff. It's the most up-to-date machine on the market to-day," drawing out the catalogue.

"I do not use one, and I am extremely sorry to say that I could not afford to buy one," said Mr. Penzance with considerate courtesy, "but do tell me about it. I am afraid I never saw a typewriter."

It was the most hospitable thing he could have done, and was of the tact of courts. He arranged his pince nez, and taking the catalogue, applied himself to it. G. Selden's soul warmed within him. To be listened to like this. To be treated as a gentleman by a gentleman--by "a fine old swell like this--Hully gee!"

"This isn't what I'm used to," he said with genuine enjoyment. "It doesn't matter, your not being ready to buy now. You may be sometime, or you may run up against someone who is. Little Willie's always ready to say his piece."

He poured it forth with glee--the improved mechanical appliances, the cuts in the catalogue, the platen roller, the ribbon switch, the

twenty-six yards of red or blue typing, the fifty per cent. saving in ribbon expenditure alone, the new basket shift, the stationary carriage, the tabulator, the superiority to all other typewriting machines--the price one hundred dollars without discount. And both Mount Dunstan and Mr. Penzance listened entranced, examined cuts in the catalogue, asked questions, and in fact ended by finding that they must repress an actual desire to possess the luxury. The joy their attitude bestowed upon Selden was the thing he would feel gave the finishing touch to the hours which he would recall to the end of his days as the "time of his life." Yes, by gee! he was having "the time of his life."

Later he found himself feeling--as Miss Vanderpoel had felt--rather as if the whole thing was a dream. This came upon him when, with Mount Dunstan and Penzance, he walked through the park and the curiously beautiful old gardens. The lovely, soundless quiet, broken into only by bird notes, or his companions' voices, had an extraordinary effect on him.

"It's so still you can hear it," he said once, stopping in a velvet, moss-covered path. "Seems like you've got quiet shut up here, and you've turned it on till the air's thick with it. Good Lord, think of little old Broadway keeping it up, and the L whizzing and thundering along every three minutes, just the same, while we're standing here! You can't believe it."

It would have gone hard with him to describe to them the value of his

enjoyment. Again and again there came back to him the memory of the grandmother who wore the black net cap trimmed with purple ribbons. Apparently she had remained to the last almost contumaciously British. She had kept photographs of Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort on her bedroom mantelpiece, and had made caustic, international comparisons. But she had seen places like this, and her stories became realities to him now. But she had never thought of the possibility of any chance of his being shown about by the lord of the manor himself--lunching, by gee! and talking to them about typewriters. He vaguely knew that if the grandmother had not emigrated, and he had been born in Dunstan village, he would naturally have touched his forehead to Mount Dunstan and the vicar when they passed him in the road, and conversation between them would have been an unlikely thing. Somehow things had been changed by Destiny--perhaps for the whole of them, as years had passed.

What he felt when he stood in the picture gallery neither of his companions could at first guess. He ceased to talk, and wandered silently about. Secretly he found himself a trifle awed by being looked down upon by the unchanging eyes of men in strange, rich garments--in corslet, ruff, and doublet, velvet, powder, curled love locks, brocade and lace. The face of long-dead loveliness smiled out from its canvas, or withheld itself haughtily from his salesman's gaze. Wonderful bare white shoulders, and bosoms clasped with gems or flowers and lace, defied him to recall any treasures of Broadway to compare with them. Elderly dames, garbed in stiff splendour, held stiff, unsympathetic inquiry in their eyes, as they looked back upon him. What exactly was a

thirty shilling bicycle suit doing there? In the Delkoff, plainly none were interested. A pretty, masquerading shepherdess, with a lamb and a crook, seemed to laugh at him from under her broad beribboned straw hat. After looking at her for a minute or so, he gave a half laugh himself--but it was an awkward one.

"She's a looker," he remarked. "They're a lot of them lookers--not all--but a fair show----"

"A looker," translated Mount Dunstan in a low voice to Penzance, "means, I believe, a young women with good looks--a beauty."

"Yes, she IS a looker, by gee," said G. Selden, "but--but--" the awkward half laugh, taking on a depressed touch of sheepishness, "she makes me feel 'way off--they all do."

That was it. Surrounded by them, he was fascinated but not cheered. They were all so smilingly, or disdainfully, or indifferently unconscious of the existence of the human thing of his class. His aspect, his life, and his desires were as remote as those of prehistoric man. His Broadway, his L railroad, his Delkoff--what were they where did they come into the scheme of the Universe? They silently gazed and lightly smiled or frowned THROUGH him as he stood. He was probably not in the least aware that he rather loudly sighed.

"Yes," he said, "they make me feel 'way off. I'm not in it. But she is a

looker. Get onto that dimple in her cheek."

Mount Dunstan and Penzance spent the afternoon in doing their best for him. He was well worth it. Mr. Penzance was filled with delight, and saturated with the atmosphere of New York.

"I feel," he said, softly polishing his eyeglasses and almost affectionately smiling, "I really feel as if I had been walking down Broadway or Fifth Avenue. I believe that I might find my way to--well, suppose we say Weber & Field's," and G. Selden shouted with glee.

Never before, in fact, had he felt his heart so warmed by spontaneous affection as it was by this elderly, somewhat bald and thin-faced clergyman of the Church of England. This he had never seen before. Without the trained subtlety to have explained to himself the finely sweet and simply gracious deeps of it, he was moved and uplifted. He was glad he had "come across" it, he felt a vague regret at passing on his way, and leaving it behind. He would have liked to feel that perhaps he might come back. He would have liked to present him with a Delkoff, and teach him how to run it. He had delighted in Mount Dunstan, and rejoiced in him, but he had rather fallen in love with Penzance. Certain American doubts he had had of the solidity and permanency of England's position and power were somewhat modified. When fellows like these two stood at the first rank, little old England was a pretty safe proposition.

After they had given him tea among the scents and songs of the sunken

garden outside the library window, they set him on his way. The shadows were lengthening and the sunlight falling in deepening gold when they walked up the avenue and shook hands with him at the big entrance gates.

"Well, gentlemen," he said, "you've treated me grand--as fine as silk, and it won't be like Little Willie to forget it. When I go back to New York it'll be all I can do to keep from getting the swell head and bragging about it. I've enjoyed myself down to the ground, every minute. I'm not the kind of fellow to be likely to be able to pay you back your kindness, but, hully gee! if I could I'd do it to beat the band. Good-bye, gentlemen--and thank you--thank you."

Across which one of their minds passed the thought that the sound of the hollow impact of a trotting horse's hoofs on the road, which each that moment became conscious of hearing was the sound of the advancing foot of Fate? It crossed no mind among the three. There was no reason why it should. And yet at that moment the meaning of the regular, stirring sound was a fateful thing.

"Someone on horseback," said Penzance.

He had scarcely spoken before round the curve of the road she came. A finely slender and spiritedly erect girl's figure, upon a satin-skinned bright chestnut with a thoroughbred gait, a smart groom riding behind her. She came towards them, was abreast them, looked at Mount Dunstan, a

smiling dimple near her lip as she returned his quick salute.

"Miss Vanderpoel," he said low to the vicar, "Lady Anstruther's sister."

Mr. Penzance, replacing his own hat, looked after her with surprised pleasure.

"Really," he exclaimed, "Miss Vanderpoel! What a fine girl! How unusually handsome!"

Selden turned with a gasp of delighted, amazed recognition.

"Miss Vanderpoel," he burst forth, "Reuben Vanderpoel's daughter! The one that's over here visiting her sister. Is it that one--sure?"

"Yes," from Mount Dunstan without fervour. "Lady Anstruthers lives at Stornham, about six miles from here."

"Gee," with feverish regret. "If her father was there, and I could get next to him, my fortune would be made."

"Should you," ventured Penzance politely, "endeavour to sell him a typewriter?"

"A typewriter! Holy smoke! I'd try to sell him ten thousand. A fellow like that syndicates the world. If I could get next to him----" and he

mounted his bicycle with a laugh.

"Get next," murmured Penzance.

"Get on the good side of him," Mount Dunstan murmured in reply.

"So long, gentlemen, good-bye, and thank you again," called G. Selden as he wheeled off, and was carried soundlessly down the golden road.